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Nationalism and its Discontents

Eva Geulen: Nationalisms: Old, New and German
Magda Mueller: Reply to Geulen
Russell A. Berman: Nationhood and Solidarity
David Pan: Myth, Community and Nationalism
Telos Staff: Nationhood, Nationalism and Identity
Alessandro Campi: What is *National Alliance*?

John Bokina: Holocaust at Mount Carmel
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Nationalisms: Old, New and German

Eva Geulen

I

Until very recently, it was commonplace to assert the obsolescence of the nation-state and deride the obvious anachronism of nationalist ideology which, one assumed, would surely disappear as well. But evidence to the contrary is mounting. Although traditional nation-states may be *de facto* ill-equipped to respond adequately to challenges such as a globalized economy, nationalist sentiments are on the rise. Perhaps these are the last signs of nationalism's death struggle, or perhaps the birthpangs of entirely new modes of conflict yet to be named. But it is also conceivable that we are witnessing something more complicated, harder to define and more difficult to acknowledge, i.e., the dynamic transformation and displacement of nationalism, or at least of certain aspects of what we are accustomed to ascribe to nationalism, such as ethnocentrism, racism, territorialism, etc. This would imply that contemporary crises are a challenge not only to nations and nationalisms, but equally to the dominant paradigms in which they have been theorized and rendered as objects of historical knowledge. The poverty of the interpretations imposed on contemporary conflicts (such as that in the former Yugoslavia) is an effect and symptom of a questionable rigidity of historiographical and theoretical models of nationalism. Nationalist sentiments are typically understood either according to the already reductive models of Western accounts of Third World nationalisms, i.e., as anachronistic but probably inevitable throwbacks of insufficiently modernized countries (e.g., Bosnia) or overinterpreted as blueprints for presumably altogether new "cultural" conflicts (e.g., "The West" vs. "The Islamic World"). But

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perhaps nationalism is not outdated, and it is our accustomed characterizations of nationalism and nationalist ideology that have become obsolete. Then it would be both possible and necessary to grant nationalism a potential for development and change — in short: a history that is not (yet) over. While some historians and critics (Eric Hobsbawm, Benedict Anderson and Reinhard Koselleck among them) began to re-evaluate the question of national identity formation in the early 1980s, the older paradigms still prevail. Perhaps it is only against the background of the perseverance of older and potentially outmoded models that movements such as the New Right can appear anti-nationalist and, therefore, more new than Right. The purpose of the following remarks is threefold. First, to shed some critical light on contemporary theorizations of nationalism and national identity; second, to demonstrate that the "new" nationalism espoused by the German New Right in certain respects escapes these theoretical models without ceasing to be nationalist; and, finally, to indicate that the mode in which this nationalism outlives and even assimilates its theorizations illuminates a fundamental problem that affects all politics of particularity — from the politics of organic communities to a certain politics of multiculturalism. By virtue of this affinity, they all remain compatible with each other within the force field of nationalism.

The current interest in populism, federalism and community evident in the last few issues of *Telos*[1] is due in no small part to the non- and even anti-nationalist impetus of these movements, as the editors and contributors stress repeatedly and with relief. Alain de Benoist, praised for his "radical critique of nationalism,"[2] asserts: "What moves the world today is beyond the nation-state."[3] Franco Sacchi echoes this sentiment with regard to the Italian New Right: ". . . the critique of nationalism and the vindication of federalism and ethnic identities constitute the most interesting departures from the old Right and define its very identity."[4] Paul Piccone also singles out the anti-nationalist attitude as the defining feature of the political paradigm shift he attributes to the Right: "Since the state presupposes the nation as its domain of operation, the new paradigm challenges the sanctity of the nation . . . from the viewpoint of a federalism predicated on decentralization, local autonomy and

1. See in particular the Special Double Issue on: "The French New Right: New Right - New Left - New Paradigm?" *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Spring 1994).
2. *Ibid.*, p. 34
3. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 75.

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cultural specificity."[5] That "ethnic identities" and "cultural specificity" were once staples of nationalist ideology has no effect on the unanimous verdict regarding these movements' anti-nationalism.

For Piccone and others, the populist emphasis on regionalism, local autonomy and relatively small, organic communities as privileged sites of truly participatory democracy is conceived almost exclusively *ex negativo*, i.e., on the basis of their opposition to the abstract universalism of the centralist nation-state. In this view, the anti-nationalism, anti-statism and anti-universalism of the French New Right are all basically the same thing. Thus the outmoded Left vs. Right paradigm is replaced by an equally dogmatic anti- vs. pro-statist paradigm that corresponds to anti- vs. pro-universalism. The first and most general question to be raised against such an identification of the nation-state and universalism is epistemological: is it legitimate to assume that the dualism of universal vs. particular corresponds necessarily to historically contingent oppositions such as centralist vs. federalist state? *Vis-à-vis* a unified, federalist Europe, for example, nations and their comparatively centralist organization assume the position of particulars which can and do claim protection from a universal, homogenizing authority. Given that the French New Right is also wary of a homogenizing Europe, its emphasis on regionalism is predicated on exactly the same reference point as the traditional appeal to French national autonomy.

Still, one could argue that the epistemological problems inherent in this definition of nationalism are outweighed and even overridden by its *historical* legitimacy. But although nations did, of course, come into existence with the rise of the modern state, it does not follow that the potential of nationalism is exhausted with the exhaustion of the state. Nationalism can certainly precede the state, as the case of Germany shows — a famously "belated" nation-state which nevertheless had an ideology of nationalism firmly in place long before 1871. But of greater relevance than empirical objections is the methodological question whether the significance and potential meaning of historical concepts can be restricted to the conditions of their historical origin. No one would want to claim that concepts such as "modernity" or "culture" have remained true to, or should now be bound by, their original meaning and definitions; why assume ahistorical stasis in the case of such an eminently modern and immanently historical phenomenon as nationalism?

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5. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

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In short, neither a critique of universalism and the state, nor the historical origin on which the operative definition of nationalism is predicated, in any way *guarantee* the obsolescence or absence of nationalism. And they can *seem* to do so only on the basis of an epistemologically, historically and methodologically questionable concept of nationalism, which runs the risk of underestimating those forces in older forms of nationalism that might allow several of its aspects to metamorphose into "new" nationalisms or to migrate into other collective identifications such as regionalism.

The history of nationalism and national identities offers numerous examples of such variability and mobility. One particularly convincing instance that pertains to the French New Right's vindication of regionalism is the traditional affinity between nationalism and regionalism, both of which not only share a geographical, territorial dimension but are, moreover, rooted in similar forms of identity-construction on the basis of exclusionary mechanisms. Even in the context of German National Socialism, regionalism (e.g., in the form of "*Stammesgeschichte*") was not at all opposed to the unity of the "Reich" but rather supplemented and enforced its unity.[6]

Of course, abandoning the exclusive focus on the nation-state and exposing nationalism's intrinsic heterogeneity and variability raises the question whether one should not jettison the concept of nationalism altogether. If the changes and deviations are so fundamental, then why employ the term "nationalism" at all? However, there are political as well as theoretical reasons to retain it. There is, first of all, the undeniable resurgence of easily recognizable nationalisms all over the world. Second, seemingly anti-nationalist alternative concepts such as regionalism and populism still evidence remarkable compatibility with nationalism. Third, it appears intellectually and politically wise to regard the "newness" of the New Right, whether French, Italian or German, with some suspicion and in general to exercise some caution before announcing major paradigm shifts. The fourth and last reason is more theoretical. At present the only viable alternative to prematurely abandoning the concept of nationalism is to subsume it under more general theories regarding the deep structures of the

6. On the structural compatibility of regionalism and nationalism, Henning Ritter writes: "The nation has a double tendency — toward toppling the stable identity once gained and toward the crumbling of this identity into more compact forms of cohesion, into parts of nations and regions." See Henning Ritter, "Der Gast, der bleibt. Anmerkungen zur Rückkehr der Nationen," in *Grenzfälle. Über neuen und alten Nationalismus*, Michael Jeismann and Henning Ritter, eds. (Leipzig: Reclam, 1993), p. 361.

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perception of otherness in all collective identifications. Such generalizing accounts of identity politics, however, always risk obscuring contextual specificity. Because the constitutive *historical* model of collective identification in Western modernity since the 18th-century has been the nation, it is safe to assume it is still operative in one way or another.

Confronted with the alternative of either relegating nationalism to the past on the basis of a restrictive and insufficient definition, or subsuming its modern specificities under general deep structures of collective identity formations, it seems prudent to carefully re-examine and probe the viability of the operative paradigms of nationalism, including those not predicated on the nation-state.[7] The Weber-inspired typological approach is still very prominent, particularly in Germany. It is evident, for example, in the work of Rainer M. Lepsius, who distinguishes ideal-types of nations, such as "*Volksnation*," "*Kulturnation*," "*Klassennation*" and "*Staatsbürgernation*." Similarly, Ralf Dahrendorf has differentiated between a "heterogeneous" and a "homogenous" nation-state. Ernst Nolte, who proposed the concept of a "defensive nation," cleansed of its aggressive potentials, also belongs to those who believe it possible to delineate and contain distinct types of nations and nationalisms which can then be adjudicated on the basis of their relative aggressiveness and harm.

While such classifications are no doubt analytically useful (even though, *contre coeur*, they already betray something of nationalism's unruly multifariousness), they remain, by virtue of their normative implications (which come to the fore, for example, in Lepsius' obvious preference for the "*Staatsbürgernation*"), in problematic methodological affinity to older 19th-century nationalist historiographical work on nationalism. It too was characterized by the desperate search for stable criteria which would allow one to distinguish between "normal" or "good" nationalism and "bad" or "abnormal" nationalism[8] — a distinction still operative in Habermas' appeal to "*Verfassungspatriotismus*." (In fact, even the attempt to differentiate between a "normal," "healthy" *national identity* and its perversion into "pathological" *nationalism* remains caught in this structure). While there are objective differences between different phases of nationalism, say between the liberal-progressive quest for unity prior to the foundation of the German "Reich" in 1871 and the reactionary and aggressive nationalism afterwards, it seems problematic and even illegitimate to abstract from the historical specificity by transferring historical

7. This is precisely what Jeismann's and Ritter's anthology has done.
8. Jeismann, "Alter und neuer Nationalismus," *op. cit.*, p. 11.

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changes and transformations to the level of typological and ultimately ahistorical categorical distinctions.

In contradistinction to the typological approach, the so-called functional approach attempts to account for nationalism's historical heterogeneities without hypostatizing them as distinct types. Long favored on the Left, this approach seeks to dispel the phenomenon of nationalism by reducing it to its instrumental character, arguing that nationalism never was and never can be anything but a means to an end. Thus it seemed sufficient to unmask the "true" political and social forces behind nationalism and unveil it as propaganda. While it is true, e.g., that 19th-century nation-states did instrumentalize nationalism for their own purposes, this insight into the function of nationalism still fails to account for the fact that of all possible means and all possible identificatory models (and the 19th century offered several, including the church or socialism) the nation should have achieved such a privileged position.[9] More generally speaking, and with an eye to the contemporary resurgence of nationalism, this approach suffers from a notorious underestimation and arrogant negligence of the affective intensities nationalist sentiments can generate.

The instrumental account of nationalism lives on in a certain misguided reception of much of the most recent research by authors such as Hobsbawm, Koselleck and Anderson. All proceed from the assumption that nationalism is a project, a construct, an artifact — as Anderson puts it, an "imagined community."[10] While this is an important insight, some have concluded that the very recognition of its artificial character dispels the dangers of nationalism, which are somehow thought to be less real when imagined or constructed. Such a conclusion resembles classical "*Ideologiekritik*" and like it is predicated on an unwarranted belief and confidence in the power of enlightenment. It is simply short-sighted to assume that nationalism will become passé once its constructed character has been recognized.

Sensing the deficits of the dominant explanations of nationalism, several critics — Hans Magnus Enzensberger, Michael Ignatieff, Henning Ritter and Michael Jeismann among them — have in very different contexts and different forms tried to respond to the unexpected resurgence of nationalism by confessing a certain helplessness. All remark on the peculiar fact that nationalisms themselves evidence a remarkable lack

9. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

10. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (London, New York: Verso, 1991).

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of consistent ideology and seem to thrive despite or perhaps even because of this lack. This acknowledgment of nationalism's theoretical instability is supported by Anderson, who notes that among nationalism's constitutive paradoxes belongs not only the tension between "the formal universality of nationality as a sociocultural concept . . . and the irredeemable particularity of its concrete manifestations," but also the tension between "its political power and theoretical inconsistency."[11] The acceptance of nationalism's theoretical inconsistency is a necessary presupposition for developing modes of inquiry that would escape the shortcomings of functional and typological approaches alike.

While Enzensberger and Ignatieff provide only vague alternatives to the standard approaches,[12] the most sophisticated and far reaching suggestions are found in Jeismann's and Ritter's anthology. Framed by an introductory essay by Jeismann entitled "Old and New Nationalism" and a concluding postscript by Ritter entitled "The Guest who Stayed," the anthology consists of three sections, each containing at least six representative texts. The first section presents essays written in response to the recent "return of nations" by such authors as Ernest Gellner, Adam Michnik and Martin Walser. The second introduces a representative collection

11. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

12. Lumping together the eruption of "civil wars" all over the world, from the streets of L.A. to Sarajevo, Rostock and Somalia, Enzensberger considers the virtually complete lack of ideological justification their most disturbing feature. Even and especially those who fight in the name of nationalism, he argues, do not really believe in the nationalism for which they kill and get killed, or at least they are unable or unwilling to produce a coherent ideology of their nationalist convictions. This leads Enzensberger into a number of interesting insights which, however, tend to disappear in the overall idea that "collective self-mutilation" has become a goal in itself that replaces the vacuum left by recent political upheavals. Cf. Hans Magnus Enzensberger, *Aussichten auf den Bürgerkrieg* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1993). In his recent book, *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism*, Ignatieff tries to account for "the return of the repressed" whose name is nationalism in ways similar to Enzensberger. Reflecting on the excesses of nationalist violence and ethnic strife in the former Yugoslavia, he concludes there are "puzzles that no theory of nationalism, no theory of the narcissism of minor difference, can resolve. After you have been to the wastelands of the new world order, particularly to those fields of graves marked with numberless wooden crosses, you feel stunned into silence by the deficit of moral explanation." Ignatieff's most interesting contribution concerns his indictment of the liberal failure to understand "the force of male resentment that has accumulated through centuries of European pacification . . . One of the hidden explanations behind nationalist revolts is that they tap into this deep substratum of male resentment at the civility." However problematic this psychologizing account may be, it highlights a potential source behind or motive for the right-wing critique of abstract universalism and enlightened progress that is very different from the intellectual trajectory espoused by the New Right. Ignatieff's remarks could help explain the strong anti-feminist current that resurfaces on certain areas of the New Right, particularly in Germany.

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of recent research, including texts by Lepsius, Koselleck and Theodor Schieder. The third allows the reader to measure the historiographical theses against older historical documents by Hegel, Hannah Arendt and others, including the famous text by Ernest Renan, "What is a nation?" published in German for the first time.

Jeismann's introduction not only provides a succinct critique of current theories of nationalisms but also probes the criteria which would allow one to distinguish between old and new nationalisms. Most importantly, he insists on the need to examine rigorously "nationalism's chameleon-like ability to transform itself in detail and as if in slow motion."[13] For only on the basis of such studies can one engage the question whether nationalism can shift from the unit of the nation-state to a higher one. Jeismann's example is Europe, but one can with equal justification raise the possibility that nationalism can manifest itself on a smaller scale than the nation-state, in regionalism and a nationalism of "organic communities."

Undoubtedly, the most significant among the criteria Jeismann lists for nationalisms old and new is the purported identity of particular (national) interests with universalist aspirations — a nexus that became historically possible through the topos of the "chosen people" inherited from religion. The identification of particular to universal interests was first analyzed by Koselleck.[14] According to him, the concerns of a particular nation (or any other collective group) develop their most damaging potential and thus become nationalist at the very moment when these concerns are identified with universalist ideals. Only the doctrine "all men are brothers" makes possible its inversion into the dogma "only my brothers are human beings."[15] Jeismann writes: "This fundamental presupposition of the old nationalism today can also serve as an indicator when it comes to identifying 'new' nationalisms. Where there is present neither a sense of mission nor a consciousness of being chosen, the category of nationalism probably leads astray."[16] This criterion of a crossing of particular interests with universalist pretensions has the benefit of being sufficiently flexible in terms of

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13. Jeismann, "Alter und neuer Nationalismus," *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26.

14. Reinhart Koselleck, "Zur historisch-politischen Semantik asymmetrischer Gegenbegriffe" in *Positionen der Negtivität*, Harald Weinrich, ed. (Munich: Fink Verlag, 1975), pp. 65-104.

15. The formulation is used by Marc Shell in his book, *Children of the Earth: Literature, Politics and Nationhood* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), which develops the nexus between Western universalism and nationalism across a historical and topographical spectrum reaching from Canada to the US, England, and France.

16. Jeismann. "Alter und neuer Nationalismus," *op. cit.*, p. 16.

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possible contents yet stringent enough to provide a concept of nationalism with a coherence that justifies its continued use and applicability. Focussing on this aspect avoids the content-orientation of the typological approach and the purely technical considerations of the functional model. Moreover, Jeismann's model exposes the characteristic gesture of the state-oriented definition prevalent in *Telos* — namely, the identification of a historical contingency such as the modern state with abstract universalism — as itself a central factor of nationalism. To put it provocatively: Piccone's assumption of a strict reciprocity between nation-state and nationalism reproduces a constitutive aspect of nationalist ideology in the very attempt to define it.

An exemplary test-case for Jeismann's theory is the nationalism associated with the recently emerging New Right in Germany. Demonstrating that the theory indeed fails in certain respects to account for this new nationalism does not allow for the conclusion that the German New Right is not nationalist. On the contrary, the German case illuminates nationalism's ability to transform and refunction itself. In this sense it confirms Jeismann's notion of nationalism as a chameleon while simultaneously demarcating the limits of his own criteriology.

II

Clearly, there are differences between the French New Right and the German New Right, which result as much from German history during this last century as from the specific circumstances of Germany after 1990. Yet, except for its pronounced interest in national identity, the German New Right, while admittedly less coherent, resembles its French counterpart in a surprising number of assumptions and rhetorical strategies. It too seeks to distance itself from any neo-fascist activities, and it is equally premised on a thorough critique of the "Dialectic of Enlightenment," abstract universalism and instrumental reason. A virulent anti-Americanism — particularly evident in the resentment toward post-war re-education — is fueled by a critique of the culture industry and the media elite that has learned as much from Adorno and Marcuse as from Heidegger. Environmental concerns play a crucial role, and the views on and fears of a unified Europe also roughly approximate those of the French New Right.

Like its French counterpart, the German New Right is not quite so new.[17] Many of its key concepts precede unification and often go back to

17. Cf. Lothar Baier, "Alte Klamotten und neue Fähnchen — Kostümfest bei der Nouvelle Droite" in *Extremismus der Mitte. Vom Rechten Verständnis Deutscher Nation*, Hans-Martin Lohmann, ed. (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 1994), pp. 249-259.

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the conservatism of the 1920s (such as the repeated diagnosis of a "crisis of liberalism," a staple of the "*Konservative Revolution*"). Current attempts by historians such as Schöllgen to rehabilitate the concept of "*Geopolitik*"[18] in order to postulate and legitimate the primacy of foreign policy on the basis of Germany's "central geographical position" actually date back to the early 1980s.[19] Similarly, the historian's debate and the discussions surrounding the Gulf War (which left the peace movement as well as the New Left divided) can now be read as steps on the way to a re-emergence of German national identity as a focus of debate, reflection and discussion that cannot be limited to the New Right but certainly finds its most forceful representatives there.[20] Since 1990, the problems resulting from unification, the discussion of asylum laws and immigration policies, as well as increasing xenophobia and the political question of Germany's role in a united Europe have brought the question of national identity ever more radically to the fore.

It is in this general climate and against this background of what Habermas once termed "the new confusion" that the New Right was able to make headway. Its forum are anthologies (by publishing houses such as Ullstein or Matthes & Seitz) as well as newspapers and journals, from the traditionally conservative *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and the Berlin *Die Welt* to extreme right-wing publications such as *Criticon*, *Mut*, and *Die Junge Freiheit*.[21] What was until recently perceived as a very small group — usually referred to as "a few young men around Rainer Zitelmann" (journalist

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18. Gregor Schöllgen, *Angst vor der Macht. Die Deutschen und ihre Außenpolitik* (Berlin, 1993).

19. Hans-Peter Schwarz, who originally coined the slogan "Von der Machtbesessenheit zur Machtvergessenheit" in *Die gezähmten Deutschen* (Stuttgart, 1985), recently published a similar volume entitled *Die Zentralmacht Europas. Deutschlands Rückkehr auf die Weltbühne* (Berlin, 1994). For a critique, see Hans Ulrich Wehler, "Renaissance der Geopolitik," in *Preußen ist wieder chic* (Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp, 1983).

20. Andreas Huyssen writes "that this whole cultural trajectory of the 1980s, with all its ambiguities and conflicts between leftist and conservative intellectuals over questions of nation and identity, can now be described as 'culminating' in the unification of October 3, 1990. Against postmodernist critiques of a notion of historical linearity and against the leftist taboo on German nationhood, the logic of history and what one might call the cunning of nationhood seem to have asserted themselves yet another time." Andreas Huyssen, "The Inevitability of Nation: German Intellectuals after Unification," in *October*, No. 61, 1992, pp. 65-73.

21. For a systematic analysis of the newspaper and its relation to the "Konservative Revolution" of the 1920s, see *Das Plagiat. Der Völkische Nationalismus der Jungen Freiheit*, Helmut Kellershohn, ed. (Duisburg: DISS, 1994). While analytically weak, the book is rich in material and documentation.

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of *Die Welt* and editor of *Westbindung* which calls into question Germany's continued commitment to the West)[22] — has grown into a rather impressive circle of journalists, intellectuals, historians and writers. What distinguishes this group from traditional conservatives is the large number of young people as well as the fact that many now on the New Right were formerly associated with the Left, such as Martin Walser and most notably Botho Strauß, whose brooding essay "Swelling Song of the Satyr," published in February of 1993 in *Der Spiegel*, has since become a frequent reference.[23] With Strauß, the New Right had suddenly gained a representative spokesperson from the intellectual establishment, lending credibility, prestige and visibility to an otherwise heterogeneous melange of old and new conservatism. The New Right cleverly used the public spectacle Strauß' text occasioned; two of its representatives, Heimo Schwilk and Ulrich Schacht, followed suit with a manifesto-like anthology, provocatively entitled *Die Selbstbewußte Nation*,[24] featuring reflections on German identity by 27 men and one woman, with Strauß' piece as the lead essay.[25] In many ways this is simply an outrageous book: racist, sexist, often proto-fascist and nationalist in its most traditional form. However, certain features of the book as a whole are indeed "new" and justify its consideration in the context of other New Right

22. Rainer Zitelmann, ed. *Westbindung. Chancen und Risiken für Deutschland* (Frankfurt, Berlin, 1993).

23. See David Pan, "Botho Strauß: Myth, Community and Nationalism in Germany," in this issue of *Telos*.

24. Heimo Schwilk and Ulrich Schacht, eds., *Die Selbstbewußte Nation. "Anschwellen oder Bocksgesang" und weitere Beiträge zu einer deutschen Debatte* (Frankfurt a.M.: Ullstein, 1994).

25. The essay first appeared in a longer version in a rather obscure yearbook entitled *Der Pfahl. Jahrbuch aus dem Niemandsland zwischen Kunst und Wissenschaft VII* (Munich: Matthes u. Seitz, 1993). It was reprinted in an abbreviated version in *Der Spiegel* (February 2, 1993). The already heated debates intensified when Strauß was asked by another magazine, *Theater Heute*, to comment on his permission to reprint the piece in the dubious context of *Die Selbstbewußte Nation*. His request that his written correspondence with *Theater Heute* not be published was ignored by the editors, who printed Strauß' response in the December issue of 1994. Along with Enzensberger's book on global civil war, and another essay by Martin Walser, the pseudo-political scandal was complete. The fact that all three authors were once considered leftist and some of them were even active in the 1968 movements (Enzensberger was editor of the influential *Kursbuch*, Strauß is known as a great admirer of Adorno) was sufficient indication to lament the move from Left to Right. As Peter Glotz put it in one of the first responses to Strauß' text: "Friends, it is Getting Serious Now!" (*Wochenpost*, February 15, 1993). When *Die Selbstbewußte Nation* appeared, several of its contributors, such as Eduard Beaucamp, journalist at the *FAZ*, distanced themselves publicly from the volume and most of its contributions. Strauß, however, confirmed his commitment in an open letter to the editors, praising them for their work (published in the *FAZ*, November 10, 1994).

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movements, namely the way (national) identity is figured and deployed. This is the only aspect of this book under consideration here.

As the title programmatically and provocatively suggests, the German nation is projected by the editors as self-conscious — so self-conscious that it can accommodate very heterogeneous, even mutually exclusive accounts of national identity and its "destiny." Thus some contributors call for a strengthening of the state, while others insist on regional or local autonomy. Some insist on the formation of national elites, others oppose the idea on populist grounds. Communitarian approaches to the problem of the relation between individual and collective stand side by side with liberal perspectives. Yet, despite, above, beyond and perhaps even by way of this heterogeneity some disturbingly uniform features emerge. The volume is characterized by a consistently high moral tone, conveyed by terms such as "evil," "shame," "dignity," etc. But this traditional conservative rhetoric is less important for the purposes of my argument, which attends to the way national identity can emerge as a consensus despite wildly divergent accounts of what it is.

The lack of any recognizable baseline with respect either to a political program or to the criteria of nationhood is particularly obvious in the case of the arguments clustered around the recurrent motif of "German self-hatred." Yet it is precisely this motif which ultimately reveals the reason why the editors and many contributors refrain for the most part from providing any positive demarcations and definitions of the national self-consciousness the title so proudly announces. At first sight, the various invocations of a "German self-hatred" appear just as heterogeneous and contradictory as everything else in the book. In one essay, German self-hatred is seen as an aberration, a fatal "*Sonderweg*" forced upon the Germans by post-1945 re-education. In interpreting one of Enzensberger's statements, Gerd Bergfleth writes about a presumed connection between self-hatred and xenophobia: "In the foreigners the Germans hate themselves, that is to say they hate their own 'foreignness' [*Ausländerei*]: the internalization of the treason of national specificity to which they have been educated as a subjected people and to which they continue to be educated by bent teachers."[26] On this account, self-hatred is the pathological inversion or perversion of a normal German identity, and the "self-conscious nation" signifies nothing but the return to the path of normalization from which Germany deviated. The author of the very next

26. Gerd Bergfleth, "Erde und Heimat. Über das Ende der Ära des Unheils," in *Die Selbstbewußte Nation*, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

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essay argues, on the contrary, that German self-hatred is in fact a constitutive tradition of German national identity and should therefore be cherished and maintained: "Is it not time to overcome our politically correct fears and to commit ourselves to that . . . which is also part of our mentality: this complex of melancholic-thoughtful introversion and world-shyness, which is so difficult to unite with the belief in progress of rational Western societies?"[27]

These are only two of the many variations of "German self-hatred." The topos gains its force, and its various implications their coherence, from the fact that "German self-hatred" is an appropriation and subsequent reversal of anti-Semitic "Jewish self-hatred." By virtue of this implicit reference, it serves to construct German national identity not as positive self-identification but as stigmatized otherness, in implied analogy to Alain Fienkelkraut's idea of a Jewish identity of persecution. But whereas Jewish self-hatred is usually understood to involve acceptance of or identification with "the mirage of themselves generated by the reference group" (i.e., the privileged group which determines others as outsiders and different),[28] the German self-hatred of the New Right possesses no unified, coherent "mirage" or representation. The unity of German self-hatred is achieved not by identifying *with* the notion of Germanness projected by a presumably dominant group, but rather by identifying *as* the persecuted minority. Its coherence lies not in its *content* but in the formal *structure* of self-hatred.[29] By positioning German national identity as a stigmatized minority-identity, this single topos alone is able to found and legitimate a formal identity. In this scenario, the positive particularities of national identity are indeed secondary. This nationalism has emancipated itself from the task of identifying its particularities by identifying itself as *particularity pure and simple*. Whether Germans need to return to their roots, or whether national consciousness has yet to be produced and is a future project, may remain open to interpretation. Precisely because it is not a unified set of views of the world, precisely because it does not have to prove any unity or essence by itself, it is that which lends and produces unity in the midst of heterogeneity and competing views. The nation of

27. Tilman Krause, "Innerlichkeit und Weltferne. Über die deutsche Sehnsucht nach Metaphysik" in *Die Selbstbewußte Nation*, *op. cit.*, pp. 136-37.

28. Sander L. Gilman, *Jewish Self-Hatred. Anti-Semitism and the Hidden Language of the Jews* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), p. 2.

29. The nationalist appropriation of victimhood is no longer characteristic of the Right, new or old, but has advanced to a dominant discourse in Germany, as the recent discussions over a Holocaust Memorial in Berlin demonstrate. Cf. Jane Kramer, "Letter from Germany: The Politics of Memory," in *The New Yorker* (July 1995), pp. 48-65.

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this nationalism has no core, no essence, no definition, no set criteria, no predetermined content. Their absence is its definition, identity and unity.

This appeal to the status of one particularity among others follows exactly the same logic as the "right to difference" of the French New Right. In the case of the German New Right's nationalism, the appeal to a (stigmatized) particularity has the additional effect of rendering the obvious heterogeneity productive. The very fact that one can afford competing concepts and different visions — a theoretical equivalent of the right to difference *within* German nationalism — figures already as proof of the self-conscious nation. The colorful pluralism of opinions suggests that a truly self-conscious nation is able to endure and to encompass a heterogeneity that would threaten the very integrity of other worldviews. Whereas the appeal to a "right to difference" seems to presume the existence of an unmediated identity, the nationalism of the New Right deliberately articulates its identity through its internal inconsistencies and is not afraid to do so. The auratic and discursive space within which German identities can articulate themselves is demarcated by the appeal to national identity as stigmatized otherness. The older imperialist "*Sendungsbewußtsein*" is inverted into the consciousness of a threatened minority. By definition relational, secondary and incomplete, this identity turns up as the consciousness of a threatened minority which claims for itself the right of the particular.[30] Indeed, identity is able to appropriate for its own purposes the normative distinction between a primary, aggressive nationalism and a secondary, passive nationalism that informs all typological approaches. The easy amalgamation of the two in the case of the New Right's nationalism clearly demonstrates that such distinctions are useless because they do not matter to a nationalism which simply absorbs them.

Since the functional approach to nationalism also fails here — because this vague nationalism serves no recognizable political purpose — the attempt to apprehend the nationalism of the New Right must turn to the problematics of universalist ideal and particular interest developed by Koselleck and reaffirmed by Jeismann. Given that both the French New Right and, even more so, the nationalist German New Right articulate

30. Failure to acknowledge that the lack of criteria and definitions is precisely the strength of this nationalism (and perhaps the strength of nationalism as an ideology) renders much Left-liberal criticism ineffective. Thus Hans-Ulrich Wehler complains: "Da wird etwas vollmundig der 'Primat der Nation' gefordert, aber der Begriff der Nation wird mystifiziert statt definiert." Hans Ulrich Wehler, "Westbindung — oder Nationalismus und Großmannsucht der Neuen Rechten?" in *Die Gegenwart als Geschichte* (Munich: Beck, 1995), pp.138-143.

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their identities as *relational difference* and in the name of particularity, the requisite identification of this particularity with universal value is clearly missing. Despite the forceful nationalist rhetoric of the German as well as the dubious racist politics of "cultural identity" of the French Right, neither would qualify as nationalist according to Jeismann. The evident inadequacy of the Koselleck-Jeismann model is especially striking if one acknowledges the German New Right's surprisingly enthusiastic reception of the Frankfurt School in general and Adorno in particular. Adorno's critique of the "Dialectic of Enlightenment" has been adopted and adapted by the New Right to confirm and legitimate its insistence on particularity and its hostility to the universal. While this reading of Adorno's case against Western universalism is even more reductive than that of Habermas (who indicts Adorno for the very hostility that the Right cherishes), it has marked the New Right with the paradoxical character of a *universalist critique of universalism*.

This is a particularly revealing paradox, for it not only announces the inadequacy and limit of any model of nationalism predicated on the aspiration to the universal, it simultaneously indicates the limits of that inadequacy. In other words, Jeismann's attempt to use the universalist aspiration as the distinguishing characteristic of nationalism old and new is not so much wrong as off the mark. It fails to recognize the extent to which the nationalism of the German New Right has already trumped the theory by embracing the critique of the universal, even while reinscribing it in a different and far less obvious manner. A truly universal critique of universalism can only be predicated on an absolute particularism. As Ernesto Laclau has argued with regard to the explosion of ethnic and cultural identities, "there is no particularism that does not appeal to some [more general] principles in the construction of its identity."[31] The "right to difference" is obviously one such principle, and its thematization by the German New Right clearly shows how a nationalism can remake itself in the guise of the very ideology meant to challenge it.

In the multifarious world of the German New Right, the locus of the universal varies according to the demands of the engagement: united Europe, Americanization, "Third Worldism" (i.e., multiculturalism), the generation of 1968, feminism — in short, the predictable litany of centralizing and alien forces that aim to deny German national identity. The

31. Ernest Laclau, "Universalism, Particularism, and the Question of Identity" in *October*, No. 61 (Summer 1992), p. 87.

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frequency and the virulence with which the contributors to *Die Selbstbewußte Nation* cite the dangers of feminism is especially noteworthy. It makes obvious the real limits to the spirit of heterogeneity and difference within the New Right. Feminism — always inevitably associated with "Americanism" — is "the sexist virus that splits our society.[32] It is again an indication of the extreme adaptability of the Right that this overt echo of the biologistic racist rhetoric of National Socialism is contained in an essay that appeals to the dangers of South African racial policy. In Felix Stern's "Feminismus und Apartheit" the conjunction is meant to be read as an equal sign. The essay ends with the warning that feminism's "totalitarian utopia" aims to institute apartheid even in the "most intimate realm of interpersonal contact."[33] The point is so obvious as to be banal: for the German New Right, the right to difference ends where the imperative to reproduce (Germans) begins. Similarly, the invocations of "self-hatred" are subject to certain limitations. An uneasiness with nationhood and national identity, which the New Right hypostasizes as self-hatred and instrumentalizes for the purposes of national identity, was certainly a feature of postwar Germany. But while the topic of national identity was indeed subject to a taboo and/or displaced onto other identities (such as regionalism), it became obvious and obviously

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32. *Die Selbstbewußte Nation, op. cit.*, p. 291.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 306. Clearly, the militant anti-feminism constitutes a divergence from similar European movements. Yet the issue of feminism on the European Right would need further investigation. Mark Wegierski's remarks on the function of a romanticized Indo-European past which informs concepts such as a "sort of feminism, and ecology" (58) suggests as much. Piccone sensed that eco-feminism and a peculiar paganism constitute a strange patchwork when he focussed his critique on the problems inherent in the New Right's critique of Christianity. See Piccone, "Confronting the New French Right," *Telos op. cit.*, p. 11-13. But it is precisely these proto-religious concerns which point back to the very nationalism that seems to be absent: While older nationalisms were based on the transfer of ideas between religion and the nation, a new nationalism might also be in need of similar legitimizing sources. Of particular relevance in this context is the strong emphasis on ecology and environmental concerns that all movements on the Right share. Environmentalism constitutes not only an opportune political commitment; it has advanced to a discourse which communicates via metaphor with other political convictions. (A detailed analysis of Strauß' "Anschwellender Bocksgesang" could easily show that threatened nature is a privileged unifying metaphorical register.) The older type of nationalism also took recourse to a quasi-biological discourse of nature that legitimized and enforced the nationalist project, namely (social) Darwinism. The New Right no longer appeals to racial purity; the insistence on a "right to difference" instead draws its legitimization from the ecological discourse of protecting bio-diversity. A sustained analysis of the concept of nature operative in the ecological discourse and its comparison with Darwinian concepts of nature is one of the most pressing desiderata of contemporary analysis.

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problematic only after 1990, when the aversions between East and West Germans brought a fact to light that the New Right must deny at all costs: *de facto* national unity revealed first and foremost the *lack* or at least the *fissures* of national identity. Unification demonstrated that national identity — like any other identity — is never identical but always constitutionally fractured. By way of the motif of self-hatred, the German New Right is able to grant a certain amount of heterogeneity, but the German-German East-West split, this embodiment of "self-hatred" among Germans, must be categorically excluded because it threatens the very notion of an identity of national identity.

There are indeed obvious limits to the remarkable heterogeneity of German nationalism, but these restrictions are inevitably in the service of "the German," an otherwise empty place-holder that merely designates the individual character of *German* nationalism. However, the absence of any greater or more secure identity is for the most part not concealed (and this is what is "new") but articulated and instrumentalized to the end of a *negative identity* as sheer particularity. It is not universalism as we know it (namely disguised or concealed particularism) that is put to the service of national identity, but particularism. As someone recently said in response to the question, "What is German?": "Nothing special (*besonderes*) but something specific (*bestimmtes*)." The new nationalism of Germanity as particularity pure and simple is an extreme and extremely revealing case of identity politics as such. Extreme because it is an identity politics without an identity; revealing, because there is growing consensus among theorists (Slavoj Zizek and others) that *no* identity politics can lay claim to a secure identity *as such*. The distinction between a nationalist and a progressive politics of particularity must be sought at a level other than that of their respective *content*.

In a social and intellectual climate in which many of those categorically excluded and victimized by Western universalism assert their rights, articulating, claiming and defending particularity and difference has become itself a quasi-universal value. Russell Berman has recently warned of the political ambivalence of a hypostatized and essentialized difference: "the valorization of difference that leads to a celebration of, say, minority discourse is, surprisingly enough, equally available to nationalist discourse. In other words, an argument for alterity can lead, with equal cogency, to multicultural and to nationalist results, especially when one is operating with German material: is the German difference the difference within Germany (minority status) or Germany itself as the different, the

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qualitatively different nation, whose *Sonderweg* distinguishes it from normative models of national development?"[34] The point is that this question cannot be answered, and that the enduring power of the nationalism of the New Right arises from the recognition and preservation of this undecidability. What is truly surprising, however, is the implication that the utterly necessary politics of difference — racial, ethnic, gender and class — may itself be caught up in the very structure of nationalism.

This proposition is not entirely absurd, but the limits of its legitimacy illustrate just why the new nationalism can transform itself according to the "progressive" codes of identity politics while simultaneously retaining hegemonic power. It is becoming increasingly evident that the notion that liberation does not lie in the sheer proliferation of differences at least deserves a serious hearing. Indeed (in direct contradiction to the intellectual history Berman likes to offer), Jacques Derrida has been insisting for the last thirty years that the situation demands not merely increasing the number of political players but in finding a way to play differently. This is a lesson Laclau (among others) purports to have learned. Pressing his claim that the explosion of particularisms is "not a viable or progressive alternative,"[35] he shows that even if taken at face value (that is, ignoring its concealed universalist aspiration), pure particularism has the effect of preserving and sanctioning the *status quo*. Instituted literally and rigorously, "the right to difference" rewards those already in positions of hegemonic power, those who currently have most of the rights and have (judicial) right on their side. There is, in short, nothing progressive about the right to difference itself. Oddly, however, Laclau ends his essay with a celebration of social antagonism: "If democracy *is* possible, it is because the universal does not have any necessary body, any necessary content. Instead, different groups compete to give their particular aims a temporary function of universal representation. Society generates a whole vocabulary of empty signifiers whose temporary signifieds are the result of political competition."[36]

Laclau wants to get rid of the old (proto-typically nationalist) error of asserting "that a particular body . . . was the *true* body of the universal" in favor of the radical democratic notion of temporary universalist functions. The idea of pure particularity is sacrificed in the process, but on Laclau's

34. Russell A. Berman, *Cultural Studies of Modern Germany. History Representation and Nationhood* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), p 5.
35. Laclau, *op. cit.*, p. 89.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 90.

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own argument that was never anything more than an untenable illusion. What is also lost along the way is any sense for what Berman calls the need to "adjudicate different differences."[37] What is forgotten, in other words, are the particularities of the particulars and the particularities of the universals they contingently, pragmatically oppose. What is forgotten and excluded is the difference between one particular and another; the difference, in Germany, between the particularity of a white German male and that of a Turk or a Kurd or a woman or a homosexual. These differences are, as John Michael notes, "always local,"[38] and only as local can they be differentiated, analyzed and challenged.

The new German nationalism demonstrates nationalism's ability to adapt itself to different contexts, mimic the strategy of its opponents and outlive its older definitions and theories. Moreover, as an extreme case of particularist identity politics, this new nationalism makes clear that even the abdication of universals, even the recognition that one's own identity remains fractured, incomplete and heterogeneous, which according to Laclau and Mouffe is a prerequisite of radical (as opposed to liberal) democracy, does not guarantee an interesting politics.[39] This does not mean, however, that one has to embrace this nationalism. But it does mean that a critique of this nationalism can and should be what critique always is: political.

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37. Berman, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

38. John Michael, "Critical Intellectuals and Identity Logic: Politics, Representation and Community" in *Telos* 101 (Fall 1994).

39. Before the Strauß debate, Andreas Huyssen called for a debate about national identity on the Left, "one that emphasizes negotiated heterogeneity" (*op. cit.* 73); Huyssen ends his essay with the "desperately hopeful hypothesis . . . that the discursive space of nation might be a space in which such problems . . . could be debated and worked through, . . . For that to happen, however, nation would have to be understood as an ongoing process of negotiating identity and heterogeneity . . . (73). The New Right has initiated such a debate — the subtitle of the volume is *A German Debate* — not the Left, and insisting on intrinsic heterogeneity is not necessarily a protection against nationalism.

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On German Nationalism: Reply to Geulen

Magda Mueller

Although inextricably bound with a discredited unilinear theory of progress, the *Sonderweg* reading of German history still thrives as the teleological context for what remains of Left ideology in Germany. Today one of its main functions is to relegitimate an increasingly obsolete Left-Right political paradigm to help occlude new unsettling political realities and New Class domination. A fundamental assumption of this approach is a "natural" trajectory of national development, which leads to the demonization of all German history, culture and politics as culminating, because of the late unification of the German nation, in the compensatory xenophobic nationalism of the Nazis. From this widely shared viewpoint, any hint of a re-emergence of German nationalism in the post-WWII period has been feared as the prelude to a Nazi revival. Not surprisingly, not only have academic careers in German Studies been facilitated by engaging in German-bashing, but nationalism as such has been the object of particularly confused and neurotic readings. This canonized interpretation of German history, however, tends to stifle all critical thinking and prevents an understanding of qualitatively new post-Cold War political realities. Thus much needed efforts to rethink the status of reunited Germany within both Europe and the world are automatically open to the charge of nationalism and neo-Nazism.

Although nationalism may be growing in some countries, it remains to be shown that such is also the case in Germany, or whether it is merely ideological speculation on the part of unimaginative intellectuals who cannot see the future other than as a mechanical extension of the past. As a result, they end up interpreting the realities of the Federal Republic as

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those of the Weimar Republic. Following German reunification, there have been numerous warnings concerning an alleged resurgence of nationalist sentiments in Germany.[1] Eva Geulen's analysis of German nationalism is part of this pattern. Predicated on an uncritically assumed abstract individuality as the only meaningful social unit and on the enthymeme of a scientistic view of a universally valid culture which automatically demeans all particularistic alternatives to pathological epiphenomena, Geulen sees all attempts to vindicate these particularistic alternatives as new and improved versions of the old nationalism. In so doing, she conflates concepts of nation, ethnicity, nationalism and identity in a night in which all cows are black, except for her politically correct white calf which, not unexpectedly, vindicates all the self-righteous shibboleths of a conformist Left academia: feminism, environmentalism, uncritical all-inclusiveness, political pseudo-specificity, etc.

The *Sonderweg* reading of German history, i.e., the notion that German development has been separate and different from that of other countries, is a notion favored formerly by the Right in Germany. Curiously, it is now being recycled by the Left in various attempts to relegitimate the Left-Right paradigm. In this leftist version, whether or not Germany missed its chance to be a nation, what distinguishes it from all other nations now is the Holocaust. For example, every possible political position within or concerning Germany must be considered in view of Auschwitz, be it the participation of German soldiers in the Gulf War or in the command of the United Nations. Another example is the recent incident in Lübeck, in which responsibility for a fire set in a house of asylum seekers was immediately attributed to xenophobic elements. The local population, heavily supported by local and national politicians, immediately demonstrated against neo-Nazis in connection with the incident, even though instigation for the fire has not been clearly established. As usual, the protests against this incident were as scarcely reported as those of the incident were exaggerated. Moreover, such protests have evoked a new debate on the mythology of German guilt and on one specific group of Germans call *Gutmenschen*,[2] meaning all those who like to take "political

1. See *Kursbuch* 109 (September 1992) entitled "Deutschland, Deutschland."

2. Gunter Hofmann, "Der Krieg der Erinnerunger. Lübeck als politische Angriffsform: Wie nach der Brandnacht die 'Gutmenschen' wieder einmal auf die Anklagebank gerieten" in *Die Zeit*, No. 6 (February 9, 1996). A critical account concerning the role of the media in reporting on the fire in the asylum seekers' house in Lübeck is thematized in Thomas Kleine-Brockhoff and Heinrich Wefing, "Jagdszenen im Namen der Pressefreiheit. Eine Nestbeschmutzung" in *Die Zeit*, No. 6 (February 9, 1996).

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and moralistic bubble baths" by engaging in candlelight vigils against xenophobia, the Gulf War, etc.[3]

Right-wing radicalism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism occur practically anywhere in the world. But because of the Nazi past, such incidents in Germany attract considerably more attention than elsewhere. No other places where there have been incidents of the kind have attained such an international notoriety as Rostock, Mölln, Solingen and Lübeck. On the other hand, vigorous German responses to xenophobia with, e.g., candlelight vigils, rallies, concerts, etc. have been largely underreported or ignored altogether. In point of fact, no other country involved in the Nazi project has dealt so thoroughly with its history of genocide as the former West Germany, through such programs as "projects on history" and "workshops on history."[4] Books condemning right-wing extremism sell well and indicate the presence of a concerned reading public.[5]

The Question of the Nation

The resurfacing of concern with the nation[6] is a result of German reunification, its position within Europe as either an American-style federal state or a strong nation-state, and its geopolitical location. The resulting discussion, limited as it may have been, has provoked a reexamination of Germany's alliance to the West and its relation to the post-communist East. Yet, from the majority of German Left-liberal perspectives, any reconsideration of a post-unification German nation is unacceptable because of the Holocaust and the prescribed need to adopt a

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3. For Gunter Hofmann, the debate over *Gutmenschen* is the continuation of the *Historikerstreit* in 1996, *ibid.*

4. Projects and workshops are conducted by groups whose goal is to uncover how local inhabitants behaved during the Nazi dictatorship. Since 1973, the Körber Foundation in Hamburg has sponsored the Students' Competition on German History, in which over 70,000 students have participated. See *Remembering the Holocaust: Some Experiences of the German President's History Competition for Young People* (Hamburg: Körber Foundation, 1995). See also Bodo von Borries, *German History: A Pupils' Competition for the Federal President's Prize* (Bonn: Inter Nationes, 1989). These are books in English, but they are published in Germany. They are also available in other languages.

5. Cf. Claus Leggewie, *Druck von rechts. Wohin treibt die Bundesrepublik?* (Munich: Beck, 1993); Michael Schomers, *Deutschland ganz rechts: Sieben Monate als Republikaner in BRD und DDR* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1990); Friedrich Hacker, *Das Faschismus-Syndrom: Analyse eines aktuellen Phänomens* (Frankfurt/M: Fischer, 1990); Julian S. Bielicki, *Der rechtsextreme Gewattäter. Eine Psycho-Analyse* (Hamburg: Rasch und Rühring, 1993), etc.

6. *Konkursbuch*, No. 27 (1992). *Grenzfälle. Über neuen und alten Nationalismus*, ed. by Michael Jeismann and Henning Ritter (Leipzig: Reclam, 1993).

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categorical moral stance. All arguments concerning the concept of nation (with language seen as the unifying factor) are viewed as belonging to the dust-bin of history. Anyone who questions this self-righteous logic is open to the charge of "fascism" or "neo-Nazism." Nevertheless, the post-Cold War German question is too important to be ignored. It is a matter of concern not only to Germans but to Europeans and the world at large, at a time when the sovereign state appears destined to be replaced or at least superseded by new political forms. At any rate, Germans have a right to consider their future without the burden of collective guilt for the sins of fathers or grandfathers.[7]

This state of affairs is complicated by the obsolescence of the old Left-Right dichotomy, which is particularly evident in a recent anthology: *The Self-conscious Nation.*[8] Not surprisingly, *The Self-conscious Nation* has been characterized by the media as dangerously right-wing. The focus is primarily on Botho Strauß and his now infamous essay, "Swelling Song of the Satyr."[9] When this essay was first published in *Der Spiegel* (February 13, 1993), most commentators saw it as the beginning of a right-wing shift in unified Germany. The condemnation of Strauß' ideas as paradigmatically "neo-fascist," even before they could be critically evaluated, is indicative of the stifling intellectual climate. Typical of Left-liberal prejudices is the title of one feature article: "Is Botho Strauß a Fascist?"[10] The author links Strauß' account to Heidegger's discussion of the Führer principle and to Oswald Spengler's projection of the decline of the West. He goes so far as to suggest that Strauß belongs to the so-called Conservative Revolution of the 1920s, and traces his ideas to people such as Ernst Jünger and Carl Schmitt.[11] Most critics engage in this kind of ideological intimidation

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7. See Richard Münch, *Das Projekt Europa. Zwischen Nationalstaat, regionaler Autonomie und Weltgesellschaft* (Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp, 1993), pp. 61-91.

8. *Die selbstbewußte Nation: "Anschwellender Bocksgesang" und weitere Beiträge zu einer deutschen Debatte*, ed. by Heimo Schwilk and Ulrich Schacht (Frankfurt/M and Berlin: Ullstein, 1994). Cf. also *Westbindung: Chancen und Risiken für Deutschland*, edited by Rainer Zitelmann, Karlheinz Weissman, and Michael Grossheim (Frankfurt/M and Berlin: Propyläen, 1993).

9. See David Pan, "Botho Strauß: Myth, Community and Nationalism in Germany," in this issue of *Telos*.

10. Willi Winkler, "Ist Botho Strauß ein Faschist? 'Bocksgesang' heißt Strauß' deutsches Pamphlet im 'Spiegel.' Eine Replik," in *Die Tageszeitung* (February 13, 1993).

11. See Stefan Breuer, *Anatomie der Konservativen Revolution* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliches Buchgesellschaft, 1993); and Manfred H. Wiegandt, "The 'Konservative Revolution' — Then and Now," in *Telos* 104 (Summer 1995), pp. 175-191.

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when dealing with the German past — especially the Weimar period. According to Tilman Spengler, the danger of Strauß' essay lies not in its arguments (which make no sense to him) but in the power of its rhetoric, which provides a perspective for "a generation still lacking its own voice or models."[12] Another writer points out that Strauß' essay is not his first "anti-enlightenment manifesto," and asks: "What does he have to do with old Nazis and new fascists?" The answer is the same: Strauß just recycles ideas articulated by members of the Conservative Revolution in the 1920s and 1930s.[13]

Not all critics follow this line. Rainer Zitelmann, among others, argues that those who prefigured the "march through the institutions" in the 1960s are now in power as teachers, professors, social workers, the media, etc., and see everyone who questions German asylum laws or other icons of the traditional Left as proto-typically fascist. Refusing to recognize that the Nazi era is long gone, they carry on the kind of struggle their parents failed to fight. As a result, everyone in Germany has to demonstrate they are *not* infected with a seemingly free-floating and highly contagious virus — neo-fascism. Zitelmann also identifies a turn to the Left in the media following unification,[14] with the incorporation of journalists from the former East Germany into influential media positions.[15] Thus he calls for the development of a counter-culture.[16]

Although the contributors to *The Self-conscious Nation* fail to rethink the German nation, not all of their analyses are obsolete. Their main focus is not, as Geulen claims, the Third World, but multiculturalism and asylum

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12. Tilman Spengler, "Der Ekelpegel sinkt. Die Stumme Rechte wird laut. Ihr neuer Rufer heisst Botho Strauß. Der Dramatiker fordert die Gegenaufklärung im Geist der alten Werte," in *Die Woche*, No. 18 (February 18, 1993), p.26.

13. Michael Schweizer, "Archaische Bockgesänge. Was hat Botho Strauß mit alten Nazis und neuen Fachisten zu tun?" in *Freitag*, No. 8 (February 19, 1993).

14. Rainer Zitelmann, *Wohin treibt unsere Republik?* (Frankfurt/M and Berlin: Ullstein, 1995), p. 101. Zitelmann was born in 1957 in Frankfurt/M and in 1986 wrote a dissertation on the "demystification of Hitler" (*Hitler. Selbstverständnis eines Revolutionärs*, Hamburg: Berg, 1987). Since 1992 Zitelmann has been Editor-in-Chief at Ullstein Publishing House and since December 1993 Editor-in-Chief of "Geistige Welt" at the newspaper *Die Welt*.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 97-114.

16. While most authors in *Die selbstbewußte Nation* are careful to distance themselves from right-wing extremists, there are exceptions. Hans-Helmuth Knütter interprets right-wing extremism as an alternative to Western hedonism, emphasizing values such as asceticism, willingness to sacrifice, devotion to an ideal, etc. See Hans-Helmuth Knütter, *Die Faschismus-Keule. Das letzte Aufgebot der deutschen Linken* (Frankfurt/M and Berlin: Ullstein, 1994), p. 82.

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laws. Even if one were to agree that immigration has always meant economic growth, mass immigration remains a problem.[17] Contrary to traditional Left doctrine, what binds communities is not political culture but their particular traditions and forms of life, which have survived decades of oppression under National Socialism, Stalinism, "real existing socialism," etc. The point is not that traditional nation-states are "ill equipped to respond adequately to challenges such as a globalized economy," as Geulen claims, but that the global economy has destroyed traditional economic structures developed within local communities.

The New Right

Geulen's portrayal of the New Right and of the contributors to *The Self-conscious Nation* conjures up visions of the Holocaust. She fails to show the extent to which they differ from the traditional Right. She is even more uncritical when it comes to *Junge Freiheit*, which began in 1986 as a weekly newsletter of the *Freiheitliche Volkspartei* (FRVP), a splinter faction of the *Republikaner*. After this group dissolved, Götz Meidinger, a conservative businessman who had founded *Unitas Germanica* (an association to support the reunification of Germany) took over the newsletter. From 1988 to 1993, *Junge Freiheit* appeared monthly and in January 1994 it became a weekly with a circulation of 30,000 to 35,000.[18]

Geulen cites a book (*Das Plagiat*)[19] about *Junge Freiheit* that classifies it as a far "right-wing publication" like *Criticon* and *Mut*. Although she acknowledges that the book is "analytically weak," she

17. Reinhart Maurer, "Schuld und Wohlstand. Über die westlich-deutsche Generalline," in *Die selbstbewußte Nation*, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

18. See Astrid Lange, *Was die Rechten lesen* (Munich: Beck, 1993), pp. 104-5. See also Dieter Stein, "Zwei Jahre Wochenzeitung — zehn Jahre *Junge Freiheit*: Langsam, aber gewaltig," in *Junge Freiheit* (January 19, 1996). Many *Junge Freiheit* contributors were part of the 1968 student revolt, while others are disenchanted leftists such as Zitelmann.

19. Helmut Kellershohn, ed., *Das Plagiat. Der Völkische Nationalismus der Jungen Freiheit* (Duisburg: DISS, 1994). This anthology is published by a group still bound to Cold War rhetoric and blissfully unaware of the failure of the traditional Left. It argues that *Junge Freiheit* "advocates a central ideological element of the so-called 'New Right' — the vehement critique of liberalism, liberal values and the liberal 'system'." That such a critique was also articulated by the Left is conveniently forgotten (p. 19). At any rate, *Junge Freiheit* acknowledges that its contributors and readers are found on the Right — mainly members of conservative student associations organized in traditional German fraternities (*Burschenschaften*). Ernst Nolte, Armin Mohler, Rainer Zitelmann et al., as well as the outspoken right-wing CDU politician Heinrich Lummer, are frequent contributors.

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noticed that most of *Junge Freiheit*'s positions are not all that different from those of the Left. For example, when reporting on the 50th anniversary of the end of WWII, *Junge Freiheit* emphasized the sufferings of the German people.[20] This is precisely what Ulrike Meinhof did in the leftist journal *Konkret* when evaluating the bombing of Dresden.[21] A similar debate occurred after the release of Helke Sander's film, "*BeFreier und Befreite,*" which focuses on the rape of German women by allied soldiers.[22]

In the absence of critical public discussion, to be on the Right today in Germany means to exercise one's critical consciousness. This is what Strauß had in mind when he wrote his disputed essay. The nation, alliance with the West, anti-fascism, the Conservative Revolution, Europe (i.e., Germany understood as a nation-state and not as a federal unit within Europe), and the Right-Left dichotomy are all major issues for the New Right. The argument is that since 1989 Germany has been faced with an identity crisis and that the question of Germany as a nation is at the center of the debate. This position, however, finds support within all political parties. They argue that within such a context *Junge Freiheit* has an important function in creating a counter-culture to the otherwise unchallenged hegemony of the Left establishment.

Unlike widely publicized images of the German New Right, its adherents have a variety of different party affiliations or none at all.[23] According

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20. See Götz Meidinger, "Vor 50 Jahren: Als die Dämme brachen," and Wolfgang Venohr, "Vor 50 Jahren: Der Kulminationspunkt wird 'Überschritten'," both in *Junge Freiheit* (May 1993) and (September 1993), respectively.

21. Ulrike Marie Meinhof, *Die Würde des Menschen ist antastbar. Aufsätze und Polemiken* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 1980), pp. 62-64. The essay is entitled "Dresden" and originally published in *Konkret*, No. 3 (1965). See also Peter Brückner, *Ulrike Marie Meinhof und die deutschen Verhältnisse* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 1976); and Klaus Rainer Röhl, *Linke Lebenslügen. Eine Überfällige Abrechnung* (Frankfurt/M: Ullstein, 1995).

22. Helke Sander and Barbara Johr, eds., *Befreier und Befreite. Krieg, Vergewaltigung, Kinder* (Munich: Antje Kunstmann, 1992). See also Gertrud Koch, "Blut, Sperma, Tränen"; and Atina Grossmann, "Eine Frage des Schweigens: Die Vergewaltigung deutscher Frauen durch Besatzungssoldaten. Zum historischen Hintergrund von Helke Sanders Film BeFreier und Befreite," in *Frauen und Film*, No. 54-55 (April 1994), pp. 3-14, and pp. 15-28. Entitled "Berlin 1945: War and Rape 'Liberators Take Liberties'" a whole issue of *October* is devoted to the American discussion of Sander's film. See *October*, No. 72 (Spring 1995), pp. 5-113.

23. A central figure of *Junge Freiheit* is Armin Mohler, who has influenced not only Zitelmann but also Alain de Benoist and the New Right in France. See Jutta Winckler- Volz, "Alain de Benoist: Elite statt Egalité" in *Junge Freiheit* (June 17, 1994). Mohler has adapted the Gramscian theory of cultural hegemony to the political program of the European New Right by stressing the need to break with racism and overt xenophobia and to open a dialogue with national-liberals and national-leftists. This is a new development, which Pflüger sees as a result of the *Historikerstreit.* Thus the historization of the Nazi-period has opened gates closed for almost forty years. See Friedbert Pflügler, *Deutschland driftet Die Konservative Revolution entdeckt ihre Kinder* (Düsseldorf: Econ, 1994), pp. 89-90.

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to *The Self-conscious Nation*, the chosen name is "democratic Right."[24] The New Right sees itself neither in the tradition of National Socialism nor of fascism. At any rate, a detailed analysis of the New Right in Germany is still lacking. The militant Left has successfully stifled every attempt in this direction. Even the moderate Left subscribes to the often criticized authoritarian attempt to control free speech. This new anti-intellectualism is part of the intellectual climate of a reunited Germany. A free exchange of ideas is no longer possible. The destruction of family life in Germany under National Socialism and under "real existing socialism" in former East Germany has deeply affected the multifaceted cultures within Germany and is in dire need of analysis. The traditional Left, however, does not seem interested. It is primarily concerned with power. Because of this obsession, the Greens have lost their credibility and independence within German politics. Critical German newspapers have similarly become voices for the Left-liberal establishment. The Left has succeeded in gaining access to publications such as *Die Zeit* and even *Der Spiegel*. Yet it is now a mere ghost of its former self and has failed to critically reevaluate and reconfigure its old bankrupt ideology. While the democratic Right is painstakingly aware of the problem of its ideological heritage, the Left has become blinded by its newly acquired power and remains intellectually anachronistic.

Nationalism or Regionalism?

According to Erich Kuby, because of their Nazi past Germans have lost their right to a German nation.[25] Far from being a debilitating predicament, this may place Germany in a position of advantage in a situation where the nation-state is disintegrating everywhere and new political forms need to be developed. This process may be facilitated in Germany by the fact that, contrary to "politically correct" warnings from an increasingly complacent Left, most Germans do not identify with the German nation but rather with their regions. Contrary to the cherished belief that of all nations Germany in particular continues to have a strong nationalist current, today

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24. According to Zitelmann: "The most important goal is the defence and reinforcement of intellectual freedom in Germany. . . . [W]here fear exists, there can be no freedom. The fear of being mistakenly 'outed' by leftist campaigns as a putative right-wing radical leads to pussyfooting, moral cowardice, and conformity. Today the autonomous 'antifa' threatens the basic laws of freedom of the press, speech, and association with the fear of naked terror." Rainer Zitelmann, *Wohin treibt unsere Republik?* 2., erw. Aufl. (Frankfurt/M; Berlin: Ullstein, 1995), p. 205.

25. Erich Kuby, *Der Preis der Einheit. Ein deutsches Europa formt sein Gesicht* (Hamburg: Konkret Literatur, 1990).

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most Germans identify first and foremost with their region. Moreover, a strong segment within Germany (that could never identify with Germany as a nation) is reasserting the obsolescence of the national construct.

Maybe what is happening is what Geulen calls the "dynamic transformation and displacement of nationalism." Contrary to Geulen's account, however, attention has to be drawn to a largely neglected but rather strong populist current running through Germany's cultural and political fabric: anti-national sentiment. This core sentiment can even be seen as inherent in standard *Sonderweg* readings of German history. Thus one could claim that the "belated" German nation has (as some of its citizens have discovered) an advantage over older nations which have never had to reflect on their artificial character, as had Germany between 1945 and 1991. Attempts to dismantle traditional regional ties (which the intelligentsia has always viewed as anti-modern) have hitherto failed.[26]

Geulen claims that Germany, as a "famously 'belated' nation-state . . . nevertheless had an ideology of nationalism firmly in place long before 1871." Did the people actually identify as Germans, or was this a particularistic ideological construct? While this question needs to be discussed in terms of "whose interests were served by a nationalist ideology," a populist analysis might also look into the pockets of nationalist resistance that have been labeled "anti-modern." From 1871 to the present, there has been within Germany a strong current emphasizing regional differences and attempting to hold on to particular languages, customs and cultures. The traditional Left has been aware of this. In the 1920s, Ernst Bloch wrote about the Communist Party agitator who spoke in languages of times long past in order to communicate his message.[27] The Nazis were also aware of these tightly-knit regional identities and wove them into National Socialist propaganda.[28] To consider this regionalist dimension part of ethnic history, as Geulen does, is inadequate.

Geulen buys into the assumption that it is necessary for Germany to be a nation-state, since this is what is required by the globalization of the

26. A different but related question is the extent to which young Germans who grew up within two German states will be able to identify with any symbols of a unified German nation-state, and/or if they are at all interested in doing so. The standard positive reply is that of the Left, which detects nationalistic sentiments in every alternative critical interpretation. See Jürgen Habermas' position on "constitutional patriotism" in "Die Stunde der nationalen Empfindung," in *Die nachholende Revolution* (Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp, 1990), pp. 157-166.

27. Ernst Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit* (Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp, 1978).

28. See the National Socialist documentary film entitled *Der Marsch zum Führer.* Released in 1940, it celebrated the regional identities of young followers of Hitler who began their march in their communities to meet him in Munich.

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market economy. The problem is not globalization but regional economics.[29] A strong populist undercurrent has surfaced in things such as local and regional resistance in Gorleben, where both long-time residents and recent arrivals have opposed the deployment of atomic waste in the salt stock; and in regional TV stations celebrating regionality. During the 1970s, the New Left tried to tap into this populist regionalism by emphasizing the various dialects within the *Liedermacher* (songwriters') movement. Recently, regional (but artificially constructed) TV programs celebrating regional locations have reinforced this phenomenon. Nevertheless, Germany as a nation, in all its artificiality, is invariably singled out as personified evil *par excellence*.

Today two forces structure German debates — the Left-liberal dominance in the media that continues to conjure up memories of Weimar and the Third Reich; and the various groups that rally against multiculturalism and criticize the masochistic relation to what is called Germany.[30] The German Left is caught in a bind: it has to deal with both the Nazi and the Stalinist past. Since Germany never had a monolithic culture, attempts to construct one never really succeeded and were always opposed by multifaceted cultures in any given community. Strong currents in this highly diverse entity called Germany continue to contradict the modernist authoritarian identity known as "the nation." Is it not time to re-examine German history independently of recycled notions of nation and nationalism, and focus instead on regions and regionalism?

This question leads back to the core of Geulen's argument, i.e., that "The new German nationalism demonstrates nationalism's ability to adapt itself to different contexts, mimic the strategy of its opponents and outlive its older definitions and theories." In other words, nationalism remains a viable concept if redefined to correspond to whatever is happening in Germany today. By the same token, Geulen argues that "the abdication of universals" can be understood as a new form of universalism: "claiming and defending particularity has become a quasi-universal value." To be sure, this is "not universalism as we know it." But then neither is nationalism, as Geulen understands it. In her view, not only does particularism and the right to difference become universalism but regionalism and populism become nationalism. Black cows once again fade into the night, and the politically correct (but otherwise obsolete) contraposition of all-inclu-

29. See *Der Spiegel*, No. 4, (January 22, 1996).

30. Klaus Rainer Röhl, "Morgenthau und Antifa. Über den Selbsthass der Deutschen," in *Die Selbstbewußte Nation*, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-100.

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sive universalism vs. xenophobic nationalism is relegitimated, along with New Class intellectuals allegedly still struggling on the side of the angels against the phantasm of nationalist darkness.

While the international media focuses primarily on the portrayal of right-wing extremism, the following appendices paint a quite different picture. According to Zitelmann: "The most important actual goal is the defense and reinforcement of intellectual freedom in Germany . . . . Where there is fear, there can be no freedom. The fear of being mistakenly 'outed' by leftist campaigns as an alleged 'right-wing radical' leads to pussyfooting, moral cowardice and conformity. The fear of naked terror, with which the Atonomen's 'antifa' threatens the basic laws of freedom of the press, speech, and association should not be underestimated ."[31] It remains to be seen whether the fear expressed by Zitelmann is warranted. For now, a neurotic atmosphere prevails in reunited Germany. Debates concerning Germany's position within Europe should be carried out in a political climate free of rhetorical attacks, physical threats and journalistic distractions. It should be a political climate in which no crushing blow (*Keule*) is answered with another, where *Faschismuskeule*[32] and *Vergangenheitskeule*[33] are not used to silence others, and discussion can take place unimpeded.

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31. Zitelmann, *Wohin treibt unsere Republik? op. cit.*, p. 205.

32. Knütter, *Die Faschismuskeule, op. cit.* Concerning the use of power against people by Autonomen groups, see pp. 44-54. Concerning the physical violence by Autonomen to prevent the distribution of *Junge Freiheit* see Zitelmann, *Wohin treibt unsere Republik? op. cit.*, pp. 205-217.

33. See Gunter Hofmann, "Der Krieg der Erinnerungen. Lübeck als politische Angriffsform: Wie nach der Brandnacht die 'Gutmenschen' wieder einmal auf die Anklagebank gerieten," in *Die Zeit*, No. 6 (February 9, 1996).

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Appendix I

*Threats to Freedom of the Press**

Rainer Zitelmann

The stated goal of antifascist "autonomous" groups in Germany is to eliminate basic democratic rights for the political Right. On December 21, 1994, the newspaper *taz* published a declaration of the "Revolutionary Lesbian and Women's Groups and Other Revolutionary Groups" which reads as follows: "On December 4, 1994 we attacked several targets in Berlin and Weimar. All of them are involved in the production and distribution of the fascist weekly *Junge Freiheit*. We seek to accelerate the end of this concoction with firebombs aimed at the printing shop, kiosks and the distributors' trucks . . . The newspaper *Junge Freiheit* is an attempt by the so-called New Right to break into German politics and culture by journalistic means. The so-called New Right understands itself as a mediator between all shades of the brown fringe, from Conservatives to National-Socialists. . . . No freedom of speech for, no dialogue with fascists and female fascists! Release all jailed antifascists! Do not look away — intervene! Look — attack! Organize the antifascist struggle!"[1]

With the December 5 burning of the Union Printing Shop in Weimar, the autonomous groups have succeeded in forcing that shop, belonging to the *Frankfurter Allegemeine Zeitung*, to terminate without notice the printing agreement with *Junge Freiheit*. The damage caused by the fire was about 2.5 Million DM ($1.25 million). If the arson had been aimed at the left *taz* and if it had not been carried out by left *Autonomen* but by the

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* Originally published as part of Rainer Zitelmann, *Wohin treibt unsere Republik?* (Frankfurt/M: Ullstein, 1995), pp. 206-217 and 233-234. Translated by Magda Mueller.

1. "Brandsätze gegen geistige Brandstifter. Der Widerstand gegen die faschistische Wochenzeitung geht weiter!!!" in *taz* (December 21, 1994).

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far Right, the arson would have certainly resulted in an outcry by the "liberal public." In this case, however, most newspapers only devoted a few lines to the arson. The only exception was the *Frankfurt Allegemeine Zeitung*, where in several articles Eckhard Fuhr emphasized the importance of the event. A few public figures did sign an appeal in support of freedom of the press: "We condemn these attacks by 'autonomous' groups, which in a morally self-rightous and historically ignorant way like to identify themselves as antifascists. Freedom of speech is a right that extends to newspapers and authors of the entire political spectrum. *Junge Freiheit* must be able to publish —despite the fact many (including the signatories of this appeal) view its political positions as more than questionable."[2]

The first to sign the appeal were Herbert Ammon, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Ullrich Eidenmüller (deputy of the Baden-Württemberg), Gernot Facius, Peter Gauweiler, Richard Herzinger, Hellmut Matthies (editor-in-chief of *idea*), Alfred Mechter-sheimer, Ulricke Poppe, Thomas Schmid (*Wochenpost*), Rolf Stolz and Professor Günter Zehm. Interestingly, neither the associations of publishers and journalists, nor the various "critical" and "engaged" public figures spoke up publicly — the same ones who otherwise immediately intervene and do not hesitate to express their "consternation" by "courageously" raising their voices against far Right violence.

The attack was only the culmination of a systematic campaign against "Nazi newspapers" organized by about 160 *Antifa* groups nationwide. The objective of these groups is to prevent the sale of the newspaper. In the media, these groups are often described as engaged youths "who want to do something against the Right." A first step in the *Antifas*' measures are letters such as the following, sent to Berlin kiosk owners: "In a recent visit to your kiosk it has been found that you often carry fascist, racist and anti-Semitic newspapers." These are identified as including not only the *Nationalzeitung*, but also conservative newspapers such as *Criticon* or the weekly *Junge Freiheit*. "By being involved in the sales of such newspapers" the vendors are thus accused of "being guilty of spreading fascist ideas." The letter closes with a warning: "In conclusion, we offer friendly advice: your address has been given to us by a person or a group with the request to approach you. We have no control over what they may do in the event you decide to continue handling these newspapers. You may also be approached by others, who may contemplate further steps. Independently of that, we hope you will stop selling these newspapers and that the matter

2. Appeal published in *Junge Freiheit* (December 9, 1994).

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is settled with this letter."[3]

In Lübeck, a "Coalition against Racism" has taken responsibility for a similar statement. In a letter distributed in August 1993 it is stated: "We would appreciate it if you stopped selling these newspapers and we did not have to approach you again." According to the letter, this "initiative" is also supported by the local Green Party as well as the Green Party in the Lübeck city council. At the end of September, the "Lübeck Coalition against Racism" went further: "A couple of weeks ago we wrote and asked you to stop selling Nazi newspapers. Unfortunately, you did not follow our request and your shelves are still filled with brown propaganda . . . . We will continue checking where and by whom fascist propaganda is sold — either openly or secretly. We will express our disapproval through public actions.[4]

That was not the end of it. Antifascist groups did act in several German cities. Kiosks were attacked, and copies of *Junge Freiheit* on display were torn up (along with other material, in order to increase property damage). Next, in several German cities kiosk owners found their door locks filled with clay so they could not be opened.[5] In October 1994, the subscribers' lists were stolen from the Weimar printing shop. These addresses were published in far Left publications, and many of the subscribers were harassed.

Targets of these "measures" are not only newspapers such as *Junge Freiheit* but also conservative public figures. Thus "wanted posters" have been found near the residence of conservative professors like Klaus Motschmann. In these posters, the person in question is exposed as a "Fascist" to his neighbors. When the French "New Right" philosopher Alain de Benoist came to deliver a lecture in Berlin in early February 1993, "he was escorted from the lecture hall by the *Autonomen* . . . Outside, a group of young people hit the 49 year old philosopher, threw him on the ground and kicked him brutally."[6]

In February 1994, the historian Ernst Nolte was invited by a Catholic student congregation to deliver a lecture on Nietzsche. He was prevented from delivering his lecture by "antifascists" who sprayed tear gas into his

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3. Quoted in "Mit Gewalt gegen die *Junge Freiheit*," in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (December 3, 1994).
4. *Ibid.*
5. "Linker Terror gegen die *Junge Freiheit*, in *Junge Freiheit* (December 9, 1994).
6. "Autonome Überfielen Französischen Philosophen," in *Berliner Morgenpost* (February 9, 1993).

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face. It has become routine to burn cars belonging to "right-wingers." This has happened not only to numerous *Republikaner* functionaries, but also to the *Junge Freiheit*'s editor, Dieter Stein, Ernst Nolte and myself. The letter distributed by those who burned Ernst Nolte's car on February 9, 1988 states: "It is useless to argue with such characters. It only legitimates their status as pseudo-scholars, thereby reducing debate to 'academic disputes' and disguising their role as imperialist agents within the university and beyond."[7]

The real scandal is not the existence of far Left groups, which stop at nothing, but the public's indifference. In some circles this is the result of "concealed satisfaction," or at least of a sympathetic "understanding," because in the fight against the "Right threat" much is allowed which would not otherwise be acceptable. Conservatives are thus threatened with becoming the target of Left campaigns or even terror if they speak out.

In late December 1994, Eckhard Fuhr characterized this situation in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* as follows: "The politics of threats, pillory and intellectual intimidation is . . . not the mania of some anachronistic eccentrics. It increasingly shapes what is called 'political culture.' Character assassination is regarded as a common, largely tolerated means in the 'struggle against the Right' where, unhindered, the political Center dances to the Left's tune."[8] The political Center does not realize that its members may eventually become the victims of the "antifascist struggle." In any case, this has already been ideologically prefigured by talk of the "extremism of the Center" and by the inflation of the term "fascism," whereby large parts of the CDU or the conservative wing of the FDP are described as "fascists."

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7. "Bekennerschreiben," cited in *taz* (February 11, 1988).
8. Eckhard Fuhr, "Systematische Verlogenheit," in *Frankfurt Allegemeine Zeitung* (December 23, 1994).

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Appendix II

*The "Antifascism" of "Autonomen" and Anarchists**

Hans-Helmuth Knütter

Organizationally independent "antifascist" activists, who call themselves "*Autonomen*," see antifascism as an opportunity to tighten their structures and reassert their subversive goals. In an August 1991 paper discussing *autonomous organization*, some *Autonomen* from Göttingen wrote: "*Autonomen* should organize themselves as 'antifascists' in cities and communities all the way up to the national level. The strength of *autonomous* antifascism lies in this great capacity for mobilization. Antifascist self-help can generate a militant praxis accepted as legitimate by other people. The confrontation with Nazis inevitably leads to confrontation with state power, thus raising the struggle to a new dimension."[1]

In the last few years, "autonomous groups" have became very popular. The Federal Office responsible for defending the constitution estimates that there are 2300 "*Autonomen*," plus several thousand more people who can be mobilized to deploy violence.[2] According to the latest report (1993), the total comes to about 5000 people. These violence-prone groups do not share a uniform ideology; they define themselves in terms of a common understanding of life. These different "autonomous" currents also share a hatred for state and society they call "militant antistatehood." They want the whole system eliminated. These *Autonomen*

* Published in Hans-Helmuth Knütter, *Die Faschismus-Keule. Das Letzte Aufgebot der Deutschen Linken* (Frankfurt/M; Berlin: Ullstein, 1993), pp. 44-54. Translated by Magda Mueller.

1. "Militanter 'Antifaschismus im Aufwind'," in *Innere Sicherheit,* No. 1 (February 28, 1992).
2. *Verfassungsschutzbericht (1990)*, p. 42.

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consider violence necessary. Their resistance is expressed practically through "militant attacks."

In leaflets and newspapers, these "antifascist" groups claim that there are no real differences between bourgeois and "fascist" ideology. In part they refer to the Marxist-Leninist account of fascism. The bourgeois state allegedly tolerates or generates fascist terror in order to justify reactionary measures against the Left. It is important for the *Autonomen* to drive the "fascists" away in order to eliminate personal threats and to prevent the spread of "fascist" propaganda. These autonomous groups often publish incriminatory information about members of far right organizations and call for attacks against them. The slogan "strike the fascists wherever you meet them" has been expanded by the *Autonomen* in the Ruhr to the recommendation: "Hit fascists hard when you strike them."

Far Left *Autonomen* in Berlin, have launched an allegedly national organization called "Antifascist Youth Front," which in early 1992 already had 25 local groups. In a 50 pages brochure titled *Tips and Tricks for Antifascists*" violent actions are described as "antifascist" resistance. Since these actions are considered illegal, they should be well prepared. It is suggested that sticks holding up banners can be used to defend against "police batons." Certain "tools" such as teargas, wood and similar objects are recommended for self-protection. Since before rallies and demonstrations there are often searches, if one needs weapons it is important to plan carefully how to smuggle them in. Sticks and similar objects are only useful if one knows how to use them. Training is necessary.

In addition to practical hints concerning preparation for political actions, dealing with things such as placards and graffiti, the brochure provides an overview of the ideological background of the "Antifascist Youth Front." There, as well as in the newspaper *Antifaschistisches Info* (published four to six times a year) and in *Antifa-Jugendinfo*, the state is associated with "fascist" tendencies. "Fascist" groups are presented as working for high finance and state institutions. In the tradition of East German "antifascism," the brochure is full of old slogans. The police apparatus allegedly protects "fascists" while taking unilateral action against "antifascists." Therefore, the brochure devotes particular chapters to themes such as arrests, trials and prisons as well as state institutions. They act according to the slogan: "Fight fascism and the system that protects it! Let us organize antifascist self-help![3]

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3. *Antifaschistisches Jugendinfo* (Spring 1992), p. 6.

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The willingness to use violence in "antifascist" activities has increased in the same way as theoretical substance has decreased after the collapse of really existing socialism. The people's front (*Volksfront*) regularly works with local autonomous groups, in league with practically the entire far Left spectrum. Nevertheless, the question of violence is discussed within their ranks because it is deemed desirable to make alliances with non-violent groups as well. In the editorial section of the newspaper *Volksecho* it is claimed, among other things, that those who do not want the *Volksfrontler* to confront the "fascists" wish to turn the *Volksfront* into a peaceful benevolent organization. The slogan "Strike the fascists wherever you meet them" should also be valid for the *Volksfront*. Its members should not be regarded as pacifists, but as revolutionary "antifascists." Violent confrontations with "fascists" and the police supporting them is both unavoidable and necessary.

The Antifascist Youth Front justifies the use of violence as follows: "The charge that 'violence produces counter-violence' is often thrown at us, when we act militantly against Nazis. This diagnosis is predicated on the claim that violence began when someone somewhere once punched someone else in the mouth, as with two gangs which, in an unending spiral of senseless violence, take revenge on each other every time there is some offence. People who think that they can thereby explain why there are Nazis and antifascists obviously have no clue as to real conditions in the streets."[4]

Reservation to violence has clearly dropped within circles of "antifascist resistance fighters" and not in the least in reaction to far Right violence. In an undated brochure titled *Ways to Organize Anti-Fascist Self-help* "autonomous antifascists" call for attacks on the far Right. A first step is to publish the alleged fascists' photos and addresses so to be able to identify, observe and attack them. It is important to know their connections, meeting places, apartments, printing shops, cars and so forth. In so doing, "they would be denied peace." In the end, however, "fascist" organizations cannot be defeated without violence. The Federal Republic of Germany, they continue, is not really a "fascist" state, but it is about to become one. Thus the question arises: "Why not attack the evil at its roots?" This means to attack the system and those responsible for it.

The number of criminal acts against real or alleged right-wing extremists has increased since 1989-90. On October 11, 1991 an "antifascist cell" burned the property of a representative of the *Deutsche Volksunion* (*DVU*).

4. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

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In an act of self- incrimination, names and addresses of additional members of the DVU, of the *Nationalistischen Front* (National Front), and the *Republikaner* were published. Two of them were attacked and their property damaged. On October 26, 1991 about 60 masked individuals invaded the house of the Austrian far rightist Karl Polacek (chairman of the *Freiheitlichen Arbeiterpartei)* in Mackenrode/Göttingen. The attackers, who called themselves "autonomous and female antifascists," threw stones and shot steel staples. In a note claiming responsibility for their action, they deemed the attack "successful": "The Nazis had 15 casualties, while none of us was injured." The note ends with the threat: "The militant initiative — the antifascists self-help organization — hit the Nazis in the mouth — we will return."

In Berlin, "autonomous antifascists and female activists" attacked the Neo-nazi Oliver Schweigert (chairman of the *Nationale Alternative* in Berlin). On October 31, 1991, they wrote about this incident in the sympathetic paper *Interim*: they caught Schweigert in an interview with French TV. He was driven to a house and beaten up. In their words: "We hope that the injuries are so heavy that this leading pig will be in pain for a long time." They stole the negatives of the "reporter asses" who, for *an honorarium*, interviewed and filmed the "Nazis" and thus gave them free advertisement. The acknowledging statement ended with the words: "Warm greetings to the comrades who attacked Karl Polacek's house in Göttingen!!!"[5]

An additional sign for the threat to the state is the mobilization of foreign youth gangs. In the Fall of 1990, the convict Ayhan Öztürk killed the *Republikaner* René Grubert in the Berlin subway and injured two other Germans. The perpetrator was acquitted on grounds of self-defense. In the same year, members of a foreign youth gang killed a young men from Dresden with a baseball bat on Berlin's Alexanderplatz. The perpetrators were let go with a suspended sentence and a fine. During the night of April 3 1992, a group of foreigners stabbed to death a 47 year old electrical engineer from Berlin-Schöneberg named Gerhard Kaindl. The background of the assassination: a customer in the Chinese restaurant in Kreuzberg where the blood-bath took place recognized Kaindl and six other members of his group as *Republikaner.* Indeed, Kaindl had belonged to the party until September the previous year. Without prior warning, the culprits plunged a knife in his back. Someone else was stabbed and more violence averted only when the owner of the restaurant intervened with his tear-gas gun. The

5. "Militanter 'Antifaschismus im Aufwind'," *op. cit.*, p. 2.

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Berliner Zeitung gave the criminals an opportunity to justify the murder ideologically. Foreign gangs are used, especially by *Autonomen* groups, for violent political acts. Typical of the "on the one hand, . . . while on the other . . ." position is the reaction of the newspaper *Neues Deutschland*: The killings are "bemoaned," but state measures against criminal "antifascism" are regarded as ineffectual and appear in a negative light.[6]

Besides "anti-imperialism," "antifascism" takes on various degrees of importance within different terrorist groups. Thus the Red Army Fraction justified its actions as resistance against the "fascist" Federal Republic of Germany. "How important the charge of fascism is for the Red Army Fraction can be seen in the fact that for the most part new recruits to leadership positions for years have been coming from so-called antifascist groups."[7] Here as well, "antifascism" serves as an important bond between the legal Left's terrorist underground and the "autonomous" scene.

Terrorism is not limited to attacks against the state; antifascism is a central focus. That is what the underground paper *Radikal* No. 140 (June 1990) claims with regard to an upcoming antifascism campaign under the slogan "Attack fascists wherever you meet them! We shit on *Großdeutschland!* We shit on the fatherland:" "Since November 9, developments are snowballing. Reunification is on the agenda — the West German capital pours out into the East . . . The radical Left answer to the ongoing reunification is, first and foremost, to confront the fascists filling the streets with their racist and sexist slogans. This answer has to take the form of militant resistance. This resistance consists of patrols to detect groups of fascists and to organize gangs of women to wait for them and smash their faces in. Resistance is telephone networks that spring into action when refugee camps are attacked." One should not wait until the fascists are on ones doorsteps, but should attack them "taking the initiative" and "erecting illegal structures here and there." ". . . to be un-German up to the last particle in everyday life: assembling, robbing, burglarizing, occupying, showing solidarity!" These explanations are followed by lists of FAP and the DVU activists.

Furthermore, in *Radikal* one also learns something about collaborating with foreign youth gangs. The journal printed a five-page long interview

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6. Dieter Betz, "Der Staat macht mobil gegen Antifaschistinnen," in *Neues Deutschland* (July 10, 1992).

7. Bernhard Rabert, "Terrorismus und Antifaschismus. Der Mißbrauch des Faschismusvorwurfs durch die deutschen Linksterroristen 1970-1986," in Hans-Helmuth Knütter ed., *Antifaschismus als Innen- und Außenpolitisches Kampfmittel* (Bornheim, 1991), pp. 77-115.

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with a Turkish comrade prefiguring further mobilization of foreign youth gangs for far Left campaigns and the possibility of joint operations with militant *Autonomen*. Since then, the presence of youth gangs in violent confrontations with the police has been stronger than ever. In addition, the journal claimed that : ". . . with reunification around the corner, and with an increase in racist assaults and laws concerning foreigners, more youth will form gangs. Youth gangs will emerge not only in West Berlin but also in West Germany. Soon, these gangs will no longer be called youth gangs but political gangs."

Practical hints are not lacking. This particular issue of *Radikal* also contains obligatory do-it-yourself instructions for making fire-bombs and explosives. *Autonomen* technicians provide new instructions for making a "longer programmable" time fuse predicated on the principle of intensification which is "very small," "extremely reliable" and thereby "more secure." The kit described in the instructions can be built by "any beginner." According to the do-it-yourself instructions: "*Autonomen* must also be careful. At many actions it is not only necessary to throw a bomb (Mollie) somewhere, but also to deposit something with calm and to be able to leave calmly." On June 30, 1992, the *Revolutionary Cells* took responsibility for two bombings of the "Right." The July 2, 1992 issue of *taz* contained an apology under the heading "Enough with the brown dirt." The *Münchener Anzeiger* and *PR-agency Althans* were accused of fascist and racist propaganda. Pipes filled with explosives had been discovered in front of the *Müchener Anzeiger*'s buildings.

The *Hannoverschen Allgemeinen Zeitung* of February 7, 1 992 and the police newspaper *Kriminalistik* of March 1992 discuss terrorism: "Typical of a growing willingness to use violence is the confession of a militant 'antifascist cell' distributed nationwide in October 1987. It openly discusses criteria for 'political murder' . . . as rationally and cold-blooded as a couple of weeks earlier in a note claiming responsibility for the RZ Revolutionary Cells' attack on the Administrative Judge Dr. Günther Korbmacher of Berlin on September 1, 1987." Since 1991-92, the emphasis has been on extending the nationwide antifascist structure — especially militant *autonomous* groups, RAF-related areas and Revolutionary Cells. Thus the potential for violent armed confrontation between Right and Left extremists is growing. "Since then, the antifascist cells' ability to mobilize and inflict violence has grown. This trend is elucidated by planned armed attacks against the far Right with a growing number of casualties, joint ventures with Turkish 'youth gangs' in Berlin and in Stuttgart."

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There are qualitative differences between growing far Right violent attacks and those carried out by the far Left. Despite the brutality of the assaults, the neo-Nazis still lack "the degree of organization, intelligent writings and refined planning of the attacks and the profile of the leading cadre; all of these are signs of the far Left's systematic approach . . . On the whole, what is emerging at present is a dubious potential for violence and confrontation, posing new challenges for the security forces regarding prevention and repression." This indicates that the Antifascist Youth Front has come under the the attention of the office responsible for defending the constitution. According to an internal report by the state office responsible for defending the constitution in Berlin: "The activity of the Berlin Antifascist Youth Front is directed against the free democratic constitutional structure, i.e., against the core of the Constitution. By this the Antifascist Youth Front meets the criteria of extremism."[8]

The strength of the uncountable far Left antifascist initiative is difficult to assess. Antifascist centers are located not only in Berlin, Hamburg and the Ruhr, but also in Freiburg, Cologne and Göttingen. The number of members in far Left organizations has greatly diminished since the collapse of the Soviet Union and East Germany. Therefore, antifascism has become the last bastion of what remains of the far Left. The willingness to engage in violence has grown, along with the level of organization of the "*Autonomen*." Of course, this is also a reaction to the success of right-wing parties. In addition, in the PDS the far Left "antifascists" have a financially strong party on their side.

Antifascism derives its rationale from Right and far Right parties' electoral success. Even the antifascism discredited by East German SED politics has partly recovered, although its membership has decreased. Still, "antifascism" promotes toleration of extremists by democratic groups as the lesser evil in joint actions.

8. Cited in *Antifa-Info*, No. 18 (May/June 1992) pp. 24ff.

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Beyond Localism and Universalism: Nationhood and Solidarity

Russell A. Berman

In the early 16th century, as humanists like Erasmus were attacking the Church with increasing ardor, it was left to Luther to phrase the call for reformation in decidedly national, even patriotic tones. Facing the onslaught of clerical plundering, he lambasted foreign exploitation: "Now that Italy is drained dry, they are coming into the German countries, and beginning with calculated restraint, but let us watch, for the German countries will soon become like Italy. Already we have a few cardinals. They think the drunken Germans will not understand what the game is, till there is not a single bishopric, monastery, parish or benefice, not a cent or farthing, left for them."[1] A few lines later, the national question is posed again, even more sharply: "How has it come about that we Germans have to tolerate such robbery, such confiscations of our property? If the kingdom of France has resisted it, why do we Germans let the Romanists make fools and apes of us in this way?"[2] Consequently the very first of Luther's reform proposals takes the form of a national resistance movement: "I suggest that every prince, peer, and city should strictly forbid their subjects to pay the annates to Rome, and should do away with them entirely. For the pope has broken the agreement about the annates, and so stolen them, to the hurt and shame of the whole German people."[3]

"The whole German people," writes Luther in his probably most popular

1. John Dillenberger, ed., Martin Luther, *A Selection from His Writings* (New York: Anchor Books, 1962), p. 419.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 420.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 432.

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reformationist tract, *An Appeal to the Ruling Class of German Nationality as to the Amelioration of the State of Christendom.* The title alone, as well as the rhetoric of the polemic, demonstrates how misplaced and historically short-sighted are claims that nationhood emerges only with the French Revolution; here at least the Reformation, two and a half centuries before the Jacobins, appears as an agenda for a national revolutionary movement. Of course the emphatic linkage of the centralized state to concepts of citizenship and nationality is indeed a Napoleonic phenomenon, and the eruption of European nationalisms, especially perhaps German nationalism, derived from anti-Napoleonic struggles, i.e., from resistance to the imperialism of the French Enlightenment. Nevertheless, without in any way diminishing the novelty of the post-Jacobin nation-state, nationhood itself — the extended network of cultural affiliations, shared memories and common languages — nationhood is of much older stuff, as Luther's words evidence. The nation-state may have begun after 1789, but not the nation.

Indeed even within the 1520 text, Luther himself chooses to point out the archaic and existential character of nationality, for in his twenty-fifth point, concerning the reform of the universities, he links contemporary 16th century conflict to a holy struggle of antiquity. "Unless they are completely altered from what they have been hitherto, the universities will fit exactly what is said in the Book of Maccabees: 'Places for the exercise for youth, and for the Greekish fashion' [II Macc. 4:9, 12]. Loose living is practised there; little is taught of the Holy Scripture or the Christian faith; the blind pagan teacher, Aristotle, is of more consequence than Christ."[4] It is of course breathtaking to see Luther model his vision of German independence by referring to the national zealotry of the ancient Jews, a metaphor deeply implicated in all the subsequent permutations of German-Jewish relations. Yet the passage can also shed light on the substance of nationhood in general. When the university as the site of learning or other cultural institutions are colonized by an imperial power — as in the Hellenistic occupation of Judea or the power of Rome in Germany — these institutions become divorced from a specifically national mission and necessarily decline into a purveyor of paganism. In other words: imperial occupation elicits paganism because the loss of the true God and the loss of nationhood go hand in hand. At least that is Luther's suggestion: a scholarship in which imperialism has repressed specifically national substances and displaced them by a sort of universalism takes on a pagan, or secular,

4. *Ibid.*, p. 470.

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character, and this secularization entails a refusal of a transcendent dimension of existence: Aristotle becomes more important than Christ. The loss of nationhood implies the loss of spiritual substance and the reduction of culture to a presentist secularism. Within the logic of Luther's analogy, the differentiated nation, and not a naturalist universalism, i.e., the nation that maintains its own character and is not submerged into an international order, figures as the possible site of grace and love, the mighty fortress of solidarity. If the nation is to thrive, then it can do so only "under God," since political freedom derives from the spiritual freedom inherent in faith.

Luther's national appeal sounds so jarring because it runs counter to a post-enlightenment discomfort with nationhood and positive faith. Following Hobbes, modernists stereotypically view the 16th and 17th centuries as eras of religious wars; the presumed chaos, so the story goes, was finally terminated by the establishment of strong states, understood, strangely enough, as evidence of progress. That sort of historiography is cut from the same cloth that presents the pre-Renaissance world as the lugubrious "Dark Ages." The suggestion that the Thirty Years War grew out of religious fanaticism (rather than political aspirations) and that it was ended only by a strong state system is surely an argument in favor of strong states. Yet an alternative hypothesis is more plausible: that it was the emancipation of the state, its centralization and the concomitant marginalization of ecclesiastical authority that unleashed the wars, leading to the territorial bureaucratic states in France and England. The outcome in Germany was quite different: since the Peace of Augsburg spirituality was defined in local, not national terms, and the Thirty Years War long deferred the emergence of a national metropole. Precisely this internal decentralization is constitutive of German specificity, up through its federal constitution and, for example, the cultural autonomy of the states: *die Kulturhoheit der Länder*. Thus, for example, no matter how problematic the unification process in 1989-90 may have been, even the *neue Länder*, the incorporated regions of East Germany, have greater freedom within the Federal Republic than do, say, Alsace and Lorraine within centralized France — let alone the sorry state of occupied Corsica. Precisely the principle of cultural autonomy of the states means that, for example, the universities in eastern Germany are supervised by regional governments, while all universities in France report to the central bureaucracy in Paris, and all students in France learn the same thing at the same time. This constitutional and national historical capacity for internal diversity also explains why it is better to be a foreigner in Germany than in France,

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where, for example, the state has decided to suppress the Islamic headscarves as a clerical affront against the laicist nation — the Vendee is always under attack, and difference is forbidden. In centralized France, "multiculturalism" is regularly dismissed as more "Anglo-Saxon" foolishness, while in Germany it is promoted as state policy, and this distinction is not only political and historical but also directly philosophical involving the alternatives of particularism and universalism, which are at the crux of any discussion of nationhood: while universalists ultimately mistrust all particularity, claiming that any display of specific characteristics is likely to usher in another war of all against all, particularists may well be able to appreciate alternative particularities, while fearing the homogenizing capacity of any umbrella universal.

These issues require concretization with regard to the current discussion on nationhood. The most familiar position is the universalism with which the left opposes all nationhood, relegating it to a domain of ideology on the basis of the assumption, inherited from Marx, that the proletariat has no homeland. Nationalism is treated as a deceptive manipulation, splitting humanity or its genuine representative, the working class, and playing into the hands of merely local cliques of the national bourgeoisie. While concessions are sometimes made with regard to some select "progressive nationalisms," particularly in the context of anti-colonial movements, even in these cases, the western left has always displayed a basic discomfort with any positive assertion of national identity, taken to be a denial of the allegedly much more fundamental universalism of the human condition.

This universalist internationalism, or, more precisely, anti-nationalism, is flawed in many ways, including the following:

1) It is counterfactual. Repeatedly the idealist expectation that some internationalist promises might override national loyalties has been disappointed. The willingness of the German and French socialists to side with their respective states — rather than with each other as members of the same working-class movement — after the outbreak of WWI in 1914 is the classic example of the failing of internationalism.

2) Internationalism denies local identities and strips individuals of the wealth of specific features that have developed through distinct experiences. Particular loyalties and traditions, as well as local conflicts — all of which may contribute to the complexity of lived identity — are treated as trivial folklore, ultimately irrelevant or even worse: as impediments to the achievement of a universal lack of character. The suppression of character requires the evisceration of experience. Within this cultural regime,

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it is not the state that withers away but rather the consciousness of national history, which further impoverishes the identity of the postmodern individual. Yet internationalism has a limit in the concreteness of experience: national difference can never be fully suppressed.

3) The universal subject is described as human and only human; no other characterization is permitted. The subject is explicitly not part of a national community that might draw on a historical dimension of its own, for any specific history might be deemed exclusionary and therefore, somehow, less than abstractly human. This exclusion of history is however in fact a refusal of time — all that matters is the transient fact of human being, and this secular humanist celebration refuses to reflect on mortality. This may explain why the rhetoric of internationalism always involves the admonition that it is the sole vehicle to avoid war: internationalism claims to be the last bulwark against carnage. This is surely a dubious historical-political assertion, since a healthy balance of power among independent nations may be more effective in preventing war than a crusading universalism. The point here however is that internationalism denies history, time, and death, and therefore reduces human life in two devastating ways. Its universalism prohibits an appreciation of specific traditions, and its humanism refuses to recognize the dialectic of mortality and transcendence.

4) The insistence on human universality denounces local ties and commitments: so-called "tightly knit communities" are maligned as parochial or racist, and their internal coherence comes under attack. Yet universalism is unrealistic: living an ethic of loving-thy-neighbor may be difficult; an ethic of loving everyone simply on the basis of the fact of their human being is impossible. The more such a draconian obligation is asserted, the more resentment it provokes. Local and national ties of loyalty are perpetually loosened, but they are not, and cannot be replaced by a livable universalist ethic. The willingness for altruistic sacrifice is always concrete and particular; it cannot be inflated through infinite abstraction.

5) Internationalism is even more vulnerable to the same ideology criticism with which it directs accusations at nationhood. Despite its idealistic resonance, the call to ignore nationality typically reflects the interests of particular groups. In some cases, single nations, engaged in imperial projects, purvey the universalist vision: Napoleonic France, Stalinist Russia, Cold-War US — other nations are treated as parochial units, while the respective grand nation casts itself as the global norm. In other cases, the hostility to nationality derives from economic pressures, when the exigencies of international trade push up against the character of national life,

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which is denounced in turn as protectionist. The defense of French film in the GATT negotiations or, more recently, the strike in the fall of 1995 against an austerity program driven by an authoritarian bureaucratic Europeanization show how national forces can resist trade relations that are inimical to a national cultural will: it was ultimately a strike for the nation, against the state. Similar lines of discussion are implicit in the American regrets about NAFTA: the nation might have been a vehicle for solidarity with its own members — through some effort at job protection, for example — but the character and the will were lacking.

While the universalist hostility to nationality typically expresses utopian aspirations and a general surpassing of local identities, there is a moderate variant which allows for the existence of nation-states, but which defines them in solely formalist or even mechanical terms. Because this liberal accommodation with the nation-state generally participates in the standard internationalist sentiment (such as support for the United Nations), all the above criticisms apply: it ignores real conflicts of interest, it is embarrassed by national specificities, it denigrates history, and it celebrates a secularist trivialization of the human condition. Indeed the moderate position involves the nation-state only in a very tenuous way, since the state is regarded as a purely administrative operation, whose laws, rather than whose past, require loyalty: from Kant's obedience to Friederician Prussia to Habermas' *Verfassungspatriotismus*. In both cases, the state does lay claim to some loyalty, albeit in formal rather than substantive terms, and its main function is the guarantee of certain rights.

In fact, this version of the state is better than its formalist defenders might suggest. Kant's insistence on obedience, for example, indicates an obligation for the individual's integration into the community, in contrast to abstract notions of individual rights in the "Declaration of the Rights of Man." Comparing the spiritual freedom of Kant's Prussians with the mobilization of Jacobin citizens, one is hard put to view the former as somehow authoritarian and the latter as worthy models of freedom. The opposite case is more likely. Furthermore, while Habermas casts the notion of constitutional patriotism solely in formal terms, i.e., as a loyalty to a state that guarantees formal rights through a legitimate legal order, the derivation of the term is in fact historical: a reflection on 20th century German history and a consequent appreciation of formal freedoms in that very specific context. In other words, his defense of formal law is not ultimately abstract or universalizing but rather located within the particular exigencies of national history. Unfortunately Habermas' argument quickly submerges this national

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orientation into the categories of his own formalizing system. Yet this very turn exemplifies, *ex negativo*, the relation between history and nationhood. The erasure of nationhood necessarily entails a suppression of the past; in Germany therefore the internationalist gesture, couched in comfortably progressive terms, allows for an avoidance of the national historical legacy. Perhaps Germans are so pro-Europe less because they are, like Nietzsche, "good Europeans," but because trading their national identity for a regional one, they think they can escape the burden of being German.

While internationalists oppose nationhood by proposing a dissolution into ever larger units or even a one-world government, there is an alternative, localist critique of the nation. In this case, which is closely associated with current populist thinking, the nation, tightly linked to the nation-state, is viewed as a threat to the autonomy of local communities. A political corollary to the 10th amendment of the US Constitution, it vindicates the regions against the central state, which it interprets as a force toward social and cultural homogenization. Like internationalism, localism rejects claims about an emphatically positive value in nationhood, but for opposite reasons. Internationalism prefers the most abstract form of organization and therefore denounces the nation as regressively concrete, while localism regards nationhood as itself a force of abstraction and therefore inimical to the particularity which is always vested in specific communities. Typically these communities are defined as the site in which human negotiation take place through face-to-face interactions; consequently these communities are conceived of as territorial and include all residents, i.e., they are understood as local and not, for example, as primarily ethnic or racial. They are comparable to neighborhoods or autonomous towns.

Preserving the priority of particular values, localism is undoubtedly preferable to internationalism, but it too is ultimately a very problematic program, for several reasons.

1) The central concept of face-to-face contact is intended to mark the importance of specific human praxis, rather than abstract bureaucratic regulation. At the same time, it reveals a surprisingly presentist moment in the conception of community: it is always the direct cooperation of members of the community, collaborating on shared issues in the present — all together at the barn-raising, so to speak — that constitutes local cohesion. References to the past are lost in this model, as are anticipations of the future. Cross-generational obligations are diminished in the presentism of the face-to-face encounter.

2) This loss of a wider temporal horizon correlates to a similar shrinking

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of the spatial horizon: the face-to-face encounter is, ultimately, only about the here and now, and its particularity is really only the abstract particularity of sense certainty. The reification of the autarchic precinct is in effect a model for the absolute autonomy of a local egoism: not Crusoe, but Crusoe's island. It implies that the merely given structures of life are fully adequate and only subject to challenge by interests that emerge from within these structures. Facticity is endowed with an authority that is no longer accessible to an ethical criticism that might derive from the sense of ultimate judgment from religious faith.[5]

3) Finally, localism (like internationalism) is deeply unrealistic. Understandably hostile to the homogenizing impact of major institutions — not only the state of course, but also the culture industry as well as other components of corporate capitalism — localism overreacts in its idealization of the smallest possible unit. To do so, it must overestimate both the good will of the rest of humanity and the strength of the community members. For example, unless one makes the optimistic assumption that the aggression and venality that have characterized human life in the past will promptly vanish, it is difficult to understand how the local communities will provide for their physical defense. One might, however, imagine communities providing for their cultural defense, if they were allowed to establish standards and prevent, say, the dissemination of Hollywood pornography, currently protected by "free speech." It is, however, not plausible that local communities could muster the resources to provide for the genuine cultivation of traditions, which would require institutions of learning hardly affordable in every village and town. Finally, in terms of economics and trade, the smallest local units will be vulnerable to corporate pressure and international trade; indeed imagining that protectionism could be delegated to town councils is a recipe for surrendering national solidarity and probably sovereignty as well — not to the locales but to corporate boards.

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5. This loss of an ethical horizon within localism corresponds to the secularizing aspect of internationalism. Where the former loses a sense for a final judgment, the legacy of Judeo-Christian prophecy, the latter's humanism suppresses the encounter with transcendence. Niebuhr argues similarly with regard to deficient modes of religious thought. "Sacramentalism" treats the world as already holy, God-given order, and thereby diminishes the critical power of the prophetic tradition. "Naturalism" approximates pantheism and diminishes the other-worldly component of religion, flattening out experience into a single world. The two stand in a relationship to one another comparable to that conjectured here for internationalism and localism. "If sacramentalism destroys the horizontal tension between present and future, naturalism vitiates the vertical tension between the concrete fact and transcendent source." *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics* (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1935), p. 33.

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Proponents of localism respond that these deficiencies — in the military, cultural, and economic spheres — might be resolved through structures of federation, and this is indeed a possible answer. Federalism is even a salutary response to the processes of homogenization. However the localists are deceiving themselves by imagining that they can rely on federal cooperation and still evade the issue of nationhood. Shared military means a shared shedding of blood; shared cultural institutions will generate common interpretive traditions; and shared economic policies will proliferate similar structures — and these commonalities constitute central elements of nationhood. Even localism slides therefore into an affirmation of nationhood, which requires some examination on its own terms, and not only through the eyes of its symmetrical opponents.

Localism narrows horizons and implies a view of humanity cut off from the infinite: local customs are, so to speak, already complete and not in need of redemption. Internationalism imposes a universalist mandate and denies the finiteness of the human condition: it denies the substantiality of particular interests. But humanity lives in the dialectic of the finite and the infinite: insight into the necessity of particularities, that is, the internal logic of specific identities, is the recognition of freedom, and it is in the nation, and in the nation alone, that freedom emerges in history. Against universalism, nationhood indicates that identity depends on partiality and difference: all humans use language and this may even be by virtue of their humanity, but not everyone speaks the same language, and this fact of linguistic plurality is not a deficit that has to be corrected in the name of an international order. Against localism, nationhood indicates that identity depends on solidarity and obligation: everyone has interests of self and family, but loyalty and obligation can extend further, both in space and time. Nationhood consequently should be seen not as a failing — either a falling off from a universalist humanism or a homogenization of local identities — but rather as a crucial component of life beyond reification.

Four aspects of nationhood deserve particular attention:

1) Reason in history: The Hegelian formula needs to be decoupled from the linear universalist teleology. The point is not that a univocal spirit passes from one nation to another, but that the specificity of particular customs that have developed over time, or concrete orders of life, take on meaning within a national frame: from an international perspective they would be merely parochial and primitive. Meanwhile the nation can maintain custom and tradition with greater depth and gravity than can an isolated precinct.

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2) The nation sets standards of loyalty that can overcome local egoism. It can articulate norms of civic obligation that transcend self-interest, and it therefore counteracts a materialist complacency at odds with the obligations of solidarity. Localism, consistently thought through, implies a disregard for the needs of the next village — surely a disastrous attitude with regard to issues of ecology. Principles of cooperation and community have to extend beyond the smallest units of face-to-face interaction; by providing for this greater scope, nationhood simultaneously allows for aspirations that go beyond the narrow confines of the locale.

3) The nation responds to a realistic assessment of the way of the world and the imperative of common defense. There is surely room for debate over the precise definition of the national interest, but it is equally an illusion that there is no such thing as a national interest. Indeed denying the specificity of a national interest (which is crucial to the internationalist argument) is most likely only a ploy to mask national interest as a universal agenda.[6] Internationalism is closer to imperialism than liberals would like to concede, just as nationhood is a powerful starting point for articulating anti-imperial positions.

4) At the crux of the finite and the infinite, nationhood is the site of a potential consciousness, a spiritual opportunity for a richer human life. It indicates the partiality of identity, which is to say the urgency of difference. Where the borders of difference lie cannot however be viewed as a theoretical problem: it is a matter of history. The emergence of a separate Austrian nationhood, for example, is a consequence of particular historical experiences and not due to some fundamental logic or distinct essences. Alternatively, regions that are now incorporated in larger nations might have developed independence and may do so in the future. The argument for nationhood is not an attack on regionalism itself but on the reduction of politics to the most local units of face-to-face interaction, which would quickly become constraining. It resists reductionism by insisting simultaneously on a larger scope than localism envisions and a deeper specificity

6. "All of the moral judgments which peaceful nations pass upon the nations which threaten the peace, principally Japan, Germany, and Italy, are, significantly, the judgments of secure and powerful nations against those less secure and more tardy in initiating their imperial enterprises. There is, in short, no position in an international conflict from which impartial judgments are possible. Every judgment is colored by interest and every claim to impartiality fails in the end to obscure the partial and particular interests which prompted or corrupted it. Thus the international situation is a perfect picture of human finitude and a tragic revelation of the consequences of sinful dishonesty which accompany every effort to transcend it." Niebuhr, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

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of character than the mere humanity of universalism. Facing the flattening of culture and the trivialization of experience that characterizes the contemporary condition, it is hardly some imagined "resurgence of nationalism" that is the problem — on the contrary.

Nevertheless the question of German nationalism has been posed, in the wake of unification, the attacks on foreigners, and the conservative turn in aspects of the political discussion. Yet there is another dimension as well: the particular hostility not only to German nationalism but to German nationhood more broadly that characterizes the American discussion. Of course some of this can be explained as a legacy of the two world wars: if it makes sense to speak of an "other" to the US, 20th century Germany would surely be high on the list of candidates. However close the Federal Republic grew to the US during the Cold War era, since 1989 divergences on policy matters have often led to disproportionate irritations between the two states: German reluctance during the Gulf War, the recognition of Croatia and Slovenia, aid to Russia, and, more recently, differences over the nuclear facility at the Technical University in Munich and the Bavarian decision on Compuserv. The point is not that such differences are in any way unnatural in the course of international relations but rather that there may be an American predisposition to overinterpret and overreact to signs of German national interest and to denounce them quickly as "nationalism" or "neo-nationalism," and this may tell us more about America than about Germany.

An unbroken optimism about progress dominates American ideology; it is the land of the future, and the corollary entails a willingness or even an imperative to suppress the past. There are, of course, exceptions, especially in areas with strong regional identities, such as the South, but elsewhere it is nearly as if the past were taboo. For the American mind, however, Germany is precisely a cipher for the past: for many immigrants it was the land left behind, and as "romantic Germany" it lent itself especially to a misunderstanding as an always premodern country, especially for an America that would cast itself as the embodied Enlightenment. In other words, an anxiety about German nationhood is preprogrammed in an American culture which is deeply fearful of the romanticism, historicism, and traditionalism which it projects onto Germany.

In this context, some of Dewey's remarks in his booklet on *German Philosophy and Politics* published in 1915 are instructive. For Dewey is an enormous admirer of German achievements, even or perhaps especially in the early phase of the Great War. After all, Germany is capable of an

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extraordinary mobilization, and this power of the state, Dewey argues, is a result of the legacy of the philosophical tradition. Indeed his goals include presenting German capacity for action as a model for the US. Nevertheless, the fundamental comparison between the two states is tilted to Germany's disadvantage: ". . . a hierarchically ordered and subordered State will feel an affinity for a philosophy of fixed categories, while a flexible democratic state will, in its crude empiricism, exhibit loose ends."[7] The contrast between hierarchical Germany and democratic America is standard fare; it is perhaps interesting that it is not meant particularly pejoratively here. Dewey's concern is more with the difference in philosophical cultures: Germany's is designated an "a priori philosophy" and America's is "experimental." The former looks backward, the latter forward, and that corresponds to the national differences: "America is too new to afford a foundation for an *a priori* philosophy; we have not the requisite background of law, institutions and achieved social organization. [In other words, Germany is a land with a past, while America has no past — RB]. America is too new to render congenial to our imagination an evolutionary philosophy of the German type. For our history is too obviously future."[8]

Dewey's comments demonstrate the problem with American discussions of German nationalism: they are less about Germany than about America, American anxieties about the past, about particularity, and about nationalisms that might challenge US global interests — although the only nationalism of real concern is German nationalism. Other nationalisms are either ignored or interpreted as imitations of Germany: recall the rhetorical equation of Saddam Hussein with Hitler.[9] Therefore evidence of a new nationalism in Germany, e.g., the Botho Strauß essay, should not be forced into a propagandistic fairytale about an authoritarian Germany from the Huns to Hitler: warnings about the eternal return of neo-Nazis makes for cozy op-ed reading, but should really be shelved along with other recent fiction.[10] An assertiveness in German national identity would be better explained as a post-colonial phenomenon, in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Empire and in the context of the readjustment of relations to the US.

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7. John Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1915), p. 44.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 129.

9. Hans Magnus Enzensberger, "Hitler's Successor: Saddam Hussein in the Context of German History," in *Telos* 86 (Winter 1990-91), pp. 153-157.

10. "Anschwellender Bocksgesang," in Der Spiegel, Vol. 47, Nr. 6 (February 8, 1993). See also David Pan, "Myth, Community and Nationalism in Germany," in this issue of *Telos*.

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Nor, given the central arguments in this essay, is there anything in general wrong with an assertion of nationhood, especially against universalizing strategies, whether they come from Washington or Moscow. Yet a defense of nationhood in terms of the structure of the human condition is sure to provoke protest: is this not a blatant universalization, an abstraction, an impermissible generalization or even a "value judgment"? Is not nationhood always constructed, imagined, and invented? The essentialist argument presented here might even be recognized and denounced as merely the expression of particular interests. That accusation is however precisely the point and the key to the defense of nationhood: particularity is inescapable, and it is therefore futile for internationalism to try to erase national allegiances. Nationhood is the political form that difference takes. Difference is inescapable and nation is fate.

Unfortunately, in the contemporary cultural-theoretical debates, the constructivists and anti-essentialists, despite their lip-service to difference, are fundamentally indebted to the same universalism they imagine they reject. Race, class, and gender, which they insist on underscoring, function in fact solely as negative categories: the critical project of highlighting the contingency of the respective discursive constructions always depends on the assumption that the features are artificial and, ultimately, irrelevant to a human core. The goal is to reach a society in which categories of race, class, and gender no longer apply: the universalism of a life without qualities.

A stronger defense of difference and particularity is called for, and this would require taking up precisely the same three terms in order to argue that they are neither merely sites of construction nor are they — as more conventional liberals and neo-conservatives would have it — fully irrelevant to cultural identity. In other words, race, class, and gender would necessarily be redefined as positive features of social existence. Race, understood not in terms of a quasi-biological pseudoscience but as the designation of cross-generational obligations, is the medium of a historical consciousness longer and deeper than the broken nuclear family allows. It does not necessarily mean prejudice, but it surely means tradition, which in turn should be understood as dynamic and not unmalleable. Class refers to position within a division of labor and therefore to participation in an internally differentiated society, as much a part of human life as gender, entailing the pleasures of sexuality as well as the capacity for reproduction, not only as a "choice" but a vital part of being human. Of course, race, class, and gender may be lodged in particular social codes at any given time and place (that is not very hard to understand); but on a

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more fundamental level they define potentials of human life that are the opposite of artificial or imagined.

Nationhood too is a positive category, defining the potential for solidarity against the reductionism entailed both in universalism and localism. It is the challenge to live particularity, no easy task in the face of homogenization and secularization. Should a people consider defending its jobs, its standards, or its way of life, it is immediately denounced as parochial, nationalist, and threatening. The accusation of nationalism is however largely a rhetorical effect of imperialism. In the recent Compuserve case, a Bavarian judge tried to keep American pædophilic pornography off the Internet in Germany, and now Deutsche Telekomm has shut out access to an American server that distributes genuine neo-Nazi material, made in California: both decisions are consistent with established norms in Germany, and both limit the free flow of so-called information.[11] Is this a sign of resurgent nationalism in Germany? Shall we take offense? Should the US roll out the journalists and the Pentagon to protect our way of life against these parochial German efforts to hamper America's tolerance for pedophilia and extremist politics? Alternatively one might treat these decisions as positive assertions of the standards of a national community, less willing to protect pornography and extremism under the mantle of free speech. At the very least, we can recognize that the balance between collective will and individual rights has a different character in Germany than in the US, and this difference demonstrates the reality of national specificity. Perhaps one might go further and ask if the German model might not be taken as exemplary. The national question is about deciding how we want to live, and if we have the will to do so.

11. *San Francisco Examiner* (January 27, 1996), p. A8.

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Botho Strauß: Myth, Community and Nationalism in Germany

David Pan

Since the end of communism and the reunification of Germany, writers from both the former East and West Germany have sounded the alarm against the materialism of German culture, the dangers of capitalist homogenization, and the decline of values. An entire generation of "left-wing" writers, including Heiner Müller, Botho Strauß, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, and Martin Walser [1] have attempted to defend German culture against the perceived threat of American capitalism and Western rationalism. Their concerns have led to another call to arms launched by critics, who see in such rhetoric an ominous return to themes already taken up by far Right intellectuals during the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich, and more recently within the German New Right of the 1990s.

Yet this dispute is not primarily one between Left and Right, nor is it just another episode in a continuing conflict between writers and critics in a literary marketplace. The new interest in myth, traditions, and the sacred is the harbinger of an epochal change in German culture which has been brewing all through the 1980s and which, like the social changes leading to the end of communism, did not begin with the fall of the Wall but were only revealed by it. In contrast to the post-1945 era, the post-1989 epoch in literature is not about new beginnings but an attack on the idea of beginnings and an attempt

1. Heiner Müller, *Zur Lage der Nation* (Berlin: Rotbuch, 1990); Botho Strauß, "Anschwellender Bocksgesang," in *Der Spiegel*, Vol. 47, Nr. 6 (February 8, 1993), pp. 202-207; Hans Magnus Enzensberger, *Aussichten auf den Bürgerkrieg* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1993); and Martin Walser, "Deutsche Surgeon," in *Der Spiegel*, Vol. 47, Nr. 26 (June 28, 1993), pp. 40-47.

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to find a connection to the past which was suppressed when 1945 was declared a zero hour. For these writers, the postmodern is *passé* and liberal-minded critics are defending an *ancien regime*. The post-postmodern has finally come into focus as the pre-modern.

This shift is nowhere more evident than in the case of Strauß, whose work throughout the 1980s has been organized increasingly around themes such as myth and the sacred. Yet the implications of this work were not recognized until the publication of his essay "Swelling Song of the Satyr" in February 1993. Strauß's treatment of art as sacred experience and his polemic against an established liberal understanding of culture have provoked passionate responses from liberal critics in a debate left unfinished in 1945 and only now returning as the repressed legacy of that time when myth and the sacred were not just the domain of fascism.

Strauß lays out his pre-modern approach to culture in three basic theses. First, he claims that Germany is in a crisis of values. A society founded on economic prosperity will ultimately come into conflict with and be overwhelmed by the power of traditional, religiously-based cultures in which the members are willing "to defend their moral laws against others even to the point of sacrificing their lives."[2] Second, he claims that a reverent relation to tradition and authority is essential for the building of individuals. The mass media have destroyed relations to a past cultural tradition, and the Left, in breaking down taboos, has destroyed respect for authority. For Strauß, the inability to be "shaken" by the past and by authority is the prerequisite for neo-Nazis excesses. Third, following René Girard, Strauß claims that violence against scapegoats is necessary for the maintenance of order because it unifies the community around certain values by focussing aggression toward a few victims. The values Strauß then defends are those imbedded in a German tradition of high art as opposed to American mass culture.

While the Right's defense of Strauß' ideas has limited itself to making his essay the centerpiece of a collection, *The Self-conscious Nation*,[3] in which the contributors, aside from generally supporting his ideas, do not attempt an extended evaluation. Liberal journalists and critics have attacked Strauß' essay for its anti-Enlightenment, anti-liberal political conservatism and condemned the references to myth, sacrifice and the

2. Botho Strauß, "Anschwellender Bocksgesang," *Der Spiegel*, Vol. 47, Nr. 6 (February 8, 1993), p. 202. This and all subsequent translations from the German are my own.

3. *Die selbstbewußte Nation*, Heimo Schwilk and Ulrich Schacht, eds. (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1994).

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sacred as at best naive and at worst proto-fascist.[4] To the extent that both right-wing and left-wing critics have simply accepted or rejected the sacred as a category, they have remained trapped within a postmodern mindset and have failed to recognize the variety of ways of understanding the sacred. Because it was abandoned by virtually everyone but the Nazis in 1945, the sacred has since remained Nazi cultural territory. Strauß' work, particularly after 1989, provides an excellent opportunity for an exploration of this space of the sacred in an attempt to finally liberate it from this *de facto* Nazi occupation.

The Aesthetic and the Rational

The first step in this engagement with the sacred is to define its boundaries. Strauß does this in his 1992 book, *Beginninglessness*, by differentiating between two ways of relating to the world. The first is based on science, reason, and the imitation of nature; the second, on art and belief: "In the end one will not have to decide between beautiful and purposive ideas. . . . The beauty of an idea is as useful for the soul and the spirit as rational cognition is for interaction with the bodily organism."[5] He does not consider these two modes of experiencing the world to be in conflict. Rather, each has a different foundation and structure, the two forms of experience alternating in our consciousness "like the workdays and holidays of understanding."[6]

While each form of understanding has its own characteristics and therefore its own role to play in our experience, in the modern world thought and rational cognition have invaded the territory of art. This territory is the realm of belief and the sacred, which Strauß takes to be the undefinable

4. Willi Winkler, "Ist Botho Strauß ein Faschist? 'Bocksgesang' heißt Strauß' deutsches Pamphlet im *Spiegel*. Eine Replik," *die tageszeitung* (February 13, 1993), cited in Irmela Schneider, "Reiz und Reaktion," *Weimarer Beiträge*, Vol. 40, Nr. 2 (1994), p. 313, and Harald Weilnböck, "Die frühen Untertöne des 'Bocksgesangs' in Botho Strauß' *Der Park*: Zur psychoanalytischen Disposition der Literatur eines neu-onservativen Revolutionärs," *Weimarer Beiträge*, Vol. 40, Nr. 2 (1994), pp. 206, 214-220. For an overview of the responses to Strauß' essay, both in the German press and in the special issue of *Weimarer Beiträge* on the "Bocksgesang" debate, see Sigrid Berka, "Botho Strauß und die Debatte um den 'Bocksgesang'," *Weimarer Beiträge*, Vol. 40, Nr. 2 (1994), pp. 165-178. For a discussion of myth in Strauß' earlier work, see Sigrid Berka, *Mythos-Theorie und Allegorik bei Botho Strauß* (Vienna: Passagen Verlag, 1991) and Russell Berman, "Myth and Modernity in *Der Park*," chap. in *Modern Culture and Critical Theory: Art, Politics, and the Legacy of the Frankfurt School* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), pp. 136-154.

5. Botho Strauß, *Beginnlosigkeit* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1992), p. 29.

6. *Ibid.*

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source out of which human values originate. The distinction between the rational and the aesthetic is itself not particularly radical; his insistence on the distinction follows a schema already developed by Immanuel Kant.[7] What raises eyebrows is the way Strauß defines the tasks proper to each realm. The liberal understanding believes that a social and cultural order must be based on reason. Joachim Vogel, for example, in his response to Strauß' essay, states his own commitment to the idea of "a social and cultural order based on an enlightened, historically and socially conscious reason — the incomplete project of modernity."[8] Strauß, claims that culture must be based on an aesthetic experience of the sacred, which divides the world into separate qualities of profane and sacred, familiar and foreign. In contrast to this attempt to create a qualitative distinction between two types of experience, the liberal perspective seeks to treat all things equally. Vogel writes that "the central concept is not the foreign, but the Other, which must indeed be accepted in its historically determined, social and even magical-sacred Otherness, but which at the same time is the universally equal, equal in terms of rights, of individuality, of dignity."[9] By transforming the question of the sacred as the intervention of the foreign in a mundane reality into a question of human rights for foreigners, Vogel shifts the discussion from the sacred to equality. Yet, in doing so, he refuses even to consider Strauß' argument about the need of the sacred in the constitution of individuals.[10] This refusal reveals an essential problem with the liberal perspective:[11] it concentrates on the problem of mediating between varying perspectives but

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7. "Hence aesthetic judgment is a special power of judging things according to a rule, but not according to concepts." Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, tr. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), p. 34.

8. Joachim Vogel, "Tragödie eines Einzelgängers," in *Der Spiegel*, Vol. 47, Nr. 10 (March 8, 1993), p. 236.

9. Vogel, *op. cit.* p. 239.

10. For a similar critique, see Henriette Herwig, "Der Zusammenbruch der profanen Eschatologie: Zum Begriff der Gegenaufklärung bei Botho Strauß," in *Weimarer Beiträge*, Vol. 40, Nr. 2 (1994), pp. 285-6.

11. This inability to enter into a serious discussion of the sacred is also evident in a prominent essay by Matthias Schmitz and Thomas Assheuer. Like Vogel, they understand the problem of the sacred and the totally Other immediately as a problem of mediation between conflicting perspectives: "Insofar as Strauß attempts here to transfer the immediacy of the totally Other experienced in connection with works of art onto the realm of the social, he excludes the central problem which inevitably arises with every encounter with the foreign in the *social* world: the problem of justice. . . . Thus the 'Other' in its particularity demands institutional forms of just comparison — social mediations, which form the limit of every artistic-religious reorganization of society." Matthias Schmitz and Thomas Assheuer, "'Wir sind enttäuscht genug': Die Befreiung des Menschen vom Staatsbürger — Botho Strauß und die Überwindung der (Post)Moderne," in *Frankfurter Rundschau* (July 10, 1993), p. ZB3.

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never poses the question of the origin of a particular cultural perspective.

Strauß faces this problem of the origins of human order head-on and determines that they are always aesthetic rather than rational. In support of this argument, he begins with the idea, derived from chaos theory but ultimately referring to arguments from Kant, that the structures of reason are inadequate for grasping the undefinable and complex meanderings of a "fractal" reality.[12] All scientific models are in fact simplifications whose construction depends on the imagination. Under the veneer of natural laws lies the reality of chaos, and all attempts to impose a form onto this chaos are not a recognition of things in the outside world but mental fabrications providing stable and comforting categories on which to base actions. "Cognition does not have anything to do with things; it is effective action, a restless creation."[13] Because the possibility of cognition is based on an act of creation rather than of reception, it is based on an originating aesthetic act out of which an ensuing logic develops.

Presence

Though Bernhard Greiner argues that chaos theory has led to a revision of Kant's description of relations to the natural world,[14] the new insights of chaos theory are merely a reaffirmation of the conclusion Kant reached in *The Critique of Judgment* that the empirical world, though subject to natural laws, is so complex that human experience of this world would not be possible were it not for aesthetic mediation of order. In developing his arguments for the necessity of aesthetic judgment in constructing a human sense of order in experience, Kant uses the same reasoning Greiner attributes to chaos theory. Kant also begins with a concept of nature which is endlessly complex and, thus, from the viewpoint of human understanding, random in its movements and changes.[15] The order

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12. For an evaluation of Strauß' use of scientific sources in *Beginnlosigkeit*, see Lutz Hagestedt, "Botho Strauß: Literatur als Erkenntnis?: Reflexionen aus dem beschädigten Leben der Postaufklärung," in *Weimarer Beiträge*, Vol. 40, Nr. 2 (1994), pp. 270-275 and Willy Riemer, "Problematik des Ursprungs: Kosmos und Chaos in Botho Strauß' *Beginnlosigkeit*," in *Weimarer Beiträge*, Vol. 40, Nr. 2 (1994), pp. 316-320.

13. Strauß, *Beginnlosigkeit*, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.

14. Bernhard Greiner, "'Beginnlosigkeit' — 'Schlußchor' — 'Gleichgewicht': Der 'Sprung' in der deutschen Nachkriegsgeschichte und Botho Strauß' Jakobinische Dramaturgie," in *Weimarer Beiträge*, Vol. 40, Nr. 2 (1994), pp. 249-50.

15. "Hence we must think nature, as regards its merely empirical laws, as containing the possibility of an endless diversity of empirical laws that [despite being laws] are nonetheless contingent [*zufällig*] as far as we can see (i.e., we cannot cognize them a priori)." Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

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imputed to nature is arbitrary, yet necessary for the experience of the world. "And yet we must necessarily presuppose and assume this unity, since otherwise our empirical cognition could not thoroughly cohere to [form] a whole of experience."[16]

In approaching aesthetic experience from the perspective of chaos, Strauß' notion of presence comes very close to Kant's idea of the sublime.[17] While Kant defines the beautiful as the experience of an apparent harmony of objects with the human faculties used for perceiving them,[18] he describes the sublime as the experience of a contradiction between human faculties and nature: "However, in what we usually call sublime in nature there is such an utter lack of anything leading to particular objective principles and to forms of nature conforming to them that it is rather in its chaos that nature most arouses our ideas of the sublime, or in its wildest and most ruleless disarray and devastation, provided it displays magnitude and might."[19]

Strauß goes beyond Kant by arguing that the miracle with the work of art is something completely unexpected and unrelated to anything which existed before.[20] While a thought "can at best be surprising, it is never a miracle. It remains in the realm of the thinkable. . . . It cannot be anything truly unexpected. Every work of art, on the other hand, enters the world as something absolutely unexpected."[21] Aesthetic experience consists of an openness to those aspects of an existing order which are anomalous and break into the present like a glowing ember out of the depths of the past.[22] The resulting experience of "presence" depends on a receptivity in which the recipient surrenders to the diffuse and the anomalous.[23]

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16. Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
17. Cf. Greiner, *op. cit.*, p. 248.
18. "(Independent) natural beauty carries with it a purposiveness in its form, by which the object seems as it were predetermined for our power of judgment, so that this beauty constitutes in itself an object of our liking." Kant, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-99.
19. Kant, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-100.
20. Cf. Greiner, *op. cit.*, pp. 248-9. The importance of the aesthetic "Augenblick" in Strauß' work has also been discussed in Berman, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-2 and Berka, *Mythos-Theorie*, *op. cit.*, pp. 46, 84-5.
21. Strauß, *Beginnlosigkeit*, *op. cit.*, p. 17-18.
22. "Of course there is no mere present, and even the purist, mystical moment emerges out of the depths of the past, the historical world of experience, but precisely as a wayward lump, not as a logical chain, and its glowing in the Now is its illumination." Strauß, *Beginnlosigkeit*, *op. cit.*, p. 129.
23. Strauß borrows the idea of presence from George Steiner's book, *Real Presences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989). See Strauß' afterword to the German edition of this book, published separately as "Der Aufstand gegen die sekundäre Welt: Anmerkungen zu einer Ästhetik der Anwesenheit," in *Die Zeit*, (June 22, 1990), p. 57.

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Surrendering is inevitable, because no individual can control his or her own origins, and myth, as the creator of these origins, becomes the foundation of every individual. "Myth weaves its knowledge beyond our heads — everyone's origins remain in darkness."[24] In order to exist, every individual must engage in the struggle with this original darkness. But the individual as individual is incapable of combatting this void. "The self-determined individual is the most blatant lie of reason."[25] The genesis of the individual is thus an assertion of individuation against the darkness of origins as well as death. This assertion is beyond the power of individuals, who are in no better position to construct their existence during life as they were able to enact their own conception and birth. The creation of the subject must be based on an originating myth beyond the immanent logic of reason. According to Strauß, the anomalous, miraculous act of creation in the work of art enacts the miraculousness of the creation of the subject.

In *Beginninglessness* Strauß makes this connection between creation of art and creation of the subject by embedding his reflections on art within the consciousness of a man considering his relation to his son, the final passages of the book describing the man as he watches the infant immediately after birth: "We greet the progeny which is our own and belongs to us and not that which suddenly intervenes and which we do not know, which has been banished by endless wisdom. In truth we have no access to the real mist out of which our consciousness arises. We press our understanding into a world closed to us."[26] Though we are normally closed to such an experience, art has the function of impressing on the recipient a sense of this surrounding mist, giving the recipient "a feeling for the diffuse occurrence before the event, for the unfinished form — for fog and clouds in all appearances, the stable as well as the ephemeral."[27]

By showing that individuals cannot construct the foundations for their existence, Strauß undermines attempts to base social order on individual rights in order to move toward his aesthetic grounding of order. But in contending that the aesthetic event emerges as something completely foreign, which then breaks into the consciousness of the recipient, Strauß proposes a crucial shift in the understanding of the role of the aesthetic. While Kant insists that aesthetic judgment is only concerned with the

24. Strauß, *Beginnlosigkeit*, *op. cit.*, p. 107.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 133.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 129-130.

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structure of human experience and not with the things themselves,[28] Strauß emphasizes that the aesthetic moment is the result of an "emergent" reality which breaks into an existing order.[29]

By locating aesthetic experience in a qualitatively distinct reality that breaks into human consciousness, Strauß treats the source of this emergent reality as foreign to the recipient in order to set up a strict divide between everyday experience and the aesthetic experience of "presence." But in thereby creating this separation between profane and sacred reality, Strauß opposes Kant's idea that this separation has its origins not in an aesthetic experience but in moral acts. For Kant, by revealing to us our relative weakness in the face of the power of nature, the experience of the sublime forces us to confront physical existence with a spiritual ideal. Rather than submitting to the physical power of nature and allowing our lives to be dictated by material needs and desires, we sacrifice our material existence in order to preserve our principles. The aesthetic experience of the sublime is thus an affirmation of our moral ability to defy the overwhelming power of nature and sacrifice material existence in favor of our "highest principles."[30] Though Kant refers to these highest principles as practical reason, he also explicitly relates the experience of the sublime to the experience of God, sacrifice and the religious fervor of Jews and Muslims.[31] In all these cases, the power of the sublime and of the sacred is based on the mind's ability to imagine aesthetically the idea of morality.

As a result, "sublimity is contained not in any thing of nature, but only in our mind, insofar as we can become conscious of our superiority to nature within us."[32] The experience of the sacred does not depend, as with Strauß, on surrender to an outside force which invades the senses, but rather on the moral power to place ideals above physical survival and comfort. "This might actually reveals itself aesthetically only through sacrifice (which is a deprivation — though one that serves our inner freedom — in return for which it reveals in us an unfathomable depth of this supersensible

28. Kant, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26.

29. He describes the fall of the Berlin Wall as an example of emergence in history, analogous to emergence in art. "What happened contained rather something of that eventfulness to which the biological sciences have given the term 'emergence': something new, something which could not be deduced from previous experience appeared *suddenly* and changed the systemic unity, in this case: the world." Botho Strauß, "Der Aufstand gegen die sekundäre Welt: Anmerkungen zu einer Ästhetik der Anwesenheit," in *Die Zeit* Vol. , Nr. 26 (June 22, 1990), p. 57.

30. Kant, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-121.

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 120-135.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 123.

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power, whose consequences extend beyond what we can foresee)."[33] The experience of the sublime brings the moral idea into the imagination as a concrete experience, first by forcing the imagination to recognize the limits of its ability to experience (in the mathematical sublime) and to control (in the dynamic sublime) sensual reality, and second by demonstrating to the imagination the mind's ability to ignore this overwhelming power of the sensual in favor of a supersensual (rational or moral) ideal. The imagination experiences in the sublime a demonstration of the human capacity to sacrifice the sensual in favor of a supersensual ideal.[34]

What is crucial for the comparison with Strauß, however, is that the imagination perceives the supersensual, not as a positive entity, but as a lack, an anomaly: "The imagination thereby acquires an expansion and a might that surpasses the one it sacrifices; but the basis of this might is concealed from it; instead the imagination *feels* the sacrifice or deprivation and at the same time the cause to which it is being subjugated."[35] The experience of the moral ideal is an experience of deprivation. Yet this lack has a positive content determined by the relation, made palpable in the sacrifice, between the physical and the spiritual in the mind. For Kant, the "exhibition of the infinite can as such never be more than merely negative,"[36] and the experience which surpasses the imagination can only be perceived as

33. *Ibid.*, p. 131.

34. Jean-François Lyotard also recognizes the relation between the sublime and the sacred in Kant, but interprets this relation as one of opposition rather than of identity. "By sacrificing itself [in the experience of the sublime], the imagination sacrifices nature, which is aesthetically sacred, in order to exalt holy law." (Jean-François Lyotard, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime* (1991), tr. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), p. 189.) Lyotard contends that nature is itself sacred, even before the sacrifice and independent of a moral law. Yet Kant, in equating the sublime with the sacred, is careful to emphasize that no object is ever sublime or sacred in itself. Sacred objects do not exist, only the experience of the sacred, which occurs through the sacrifice of material objects according to the dictates of a moral law. The imagination does indeed sacrifice nature in order to exalt holy law, but it is only in this act of sacrifice that the experience of the sacred ever occurs. Moreover, this sacrifice of nature is not a sacrifice of the imagination itself, as Lyotard claims, but only of its "empirical use." (Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 129) Imagination, in sacrificing its use in the empirical realm, "acquires an expansion and might" (*Ibid.*, p. 129) in the supersensual realm. Lyotard's attempt to interpret the sublime as "the sacrifice of the imagination" (Lyotard, *op. cit.*, p. 189) allows him to claim that the sublime is based on a sacrilegious destruction of the aesthetic realm of the imagination in favor of the rational realm of moral law. (*Ibid.*, p. 190) By opposing the moral faculty of the mind to the aesthetic imagination, Lyotard perpetrates the same fetishization of the aesthetic as natural force as Strauß. By contrast, Kant insists upon the essential role of moral law in creating the aesthetic experience of the sacred.

35. Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 135.

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such once a rational and moral faculty comes into play. By contrast, Strauß treats aesthetic experience as if it were the direct mediator of a diffuse haze outside human experience and action. Consequently, he focuses on the sacred exclusively as a singular aesthetic event and ignores the underlying moral component. For Strauß, aesthetic "presence" does not derive from a distinct moral dimension but is itself the source of the moral ideal.

This shift in emphasis becomes most striking in Strauß' attacks on the culture industry: "Whoever allows himself to be gawked at by millions of strangers during a private conversation damages the dignity and the wonder of the dialogue, face-to-face speech, and should be punished with the lifelong withdrawal of an intimate sphere. The regime of the telecratic public sphere is the unbloodiest rule of violence and at the same time the most comprehensive totalitarianism in history."[37] Such an extreme reaction to German television can only make sense when aesthetic experience itself becomes sacred, rather than the moral order which underlies it. As a consequence of his stance, the solutions Strauß proposes for the perceived German crisis of culture are not moral (e.g., stop burning down refugee centers) but aesthetic: "so many wonderful writers still to be read — so much material and models for a young person to become a loner [*Einzelgänger*]. One only needs to be able to choose: the only thing one needs is the courage to secede, to turn away from the mainstream. I am convinced that the magical sites of seclusion, that a scattered bunch of inspired nonconformists are indispensable for the maintenance of a general system of understanding."[38] Instead of mediating a collective moral sensibility to the individual, art for Strauß turns the individual away from the collective in order to create a minority of "inspired non-conformists" who maintain order for the masses. The aesthetic experience, rather than a moral sensibility, is itself the source of a sacred experience, which occurs in isolation from, and in opposition to, the views of the community and is only accessible to a select group of the "inspired."

Matthias Schmitz and Thomas Assheuer have described both the aestheticism and elitism of Strauß' conception of the sacred in art in which "emancipation can only be imagined as a 'being freed from outside,' the outside understood as a cultural shock."[39] Yet their critique is misplaced, to the extent that they classify together and reject all attempts at cultural

37. Strauß, "Anschwellender Bocksgesang," *op. cit.*, p. 207.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 206.
39. Schmitz and Assheuer, *op. cit.*, p. ZB3. Cf. also Bernd Graff, "Wirklichkeit ist das, was wirkt. Oder: Die Schaubühne als 'neutraler Boden der Nation' — 'Überlegungen zu Botho Strauß' *Park* und *Besucher*," in *Weimarer Beiträge*, Vol. 40, Nr. 2 (1994), pp. 229-230.

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creation, the construction of truth and the search for tradition: "Strauß abandons, under the cover of a neo-Gnosticism, the completely enlightened world of the (post)modern through the emergency exit of an imitation authenticity. Like liturgical phrases from a book of prayers, he emphasizes, not 'critique of the existing order,' but creation, not play, but truth, not concrete utopia, but 'origins and tradition'."[40] The consequence of Schmitz's and Assheuer's blanket rejection of "creation," "truth," and "tradition" in favor of "critique," "play," and "utopia" is an inability to differentiate between Strauß' fetishization of the aesthetic and other attempts to consider the sacred as an essential category for human experience.

As opposed to both Strauß' emphasis on the primacy of the purely aesthetic and the equally one-sided liberal rejection of the sacred as the basis for social order, Kant maintains the primacy of moral ideas for the construction of individual aesthetic experience. The ability to experience the sacred depends on the cultural development of moral ideas in a community. Thus an individual who does not exist in a proper cultural context will not be able to perceive the sublime. "What is called sublime by us, having been prepared through culture, comes across as merely repellent to a person who is uncultured and lacking in the development of moral ideas."[41] The importance of aesthetic experience is a result of the fact that moral ideas are based in a collective and must be mediated to each individual.

The sacred is necessary as the aesthetic experience which performs this mediation. The experience of the sacred cannot be made by one artist for the benefit of the community, as in the case of science. Rather, because morality cannot be carried out by the few for the many, the sacred must be experienced independently and individually. This necessity explains the efficacy of "primitive" forms of social organization supported by taboos. As opposed to written laws, taboos only exist within the consciousness of individuals in a community. Though he describes the mechanism of taboos in a different way, Strauß recognizes their significance: "The old

40. Schmitz and Assheuer, *op. cit.*, p. ZB3.

41. Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 124. Kant also notes, however that "the fact that a judgment about the sublime in nature requires culture . . . still in no way implies that it was initially produced by culture and then introduced to society by way of (say) mere convention. Rather, it has its foundation in human nature: in something that, along with common sense, we may require and demand of everyone, namely, the predisposition to the feeling for (practical) ideas, i.e., to moral feeling." *Ibid.*, p. 125. But though we might reasonably demand moral feeling from everyone and the *idea* of the sublime can perhaps be deduced from human nature, the actual existence of such moral ideas will depend upon the characteristics of a particular community. Here, it is precisely conventions and rituals which present the experience of the sublime to each individual in order to reinforce moral ideas.

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held rules to be sacred. Consider, on the one hand, how matter-of-factly, how 'efficiently' the taboo was able to provide protection and on the other, the arduous paths which must now be traveled by the enlightened in order, after the desolating destruction of taboos which has afflicted both nature and the soul, to construct safe zones against violent determination."[42] Because they are inseparable from the community members' everyday actions, the taboos form a cultural system which is constantly being extended, reduced, and revised according to the exigencies affecting the people in the community in their everyday experience. As opposed to this self-regulating system, enlightenment attempts to replace taboos with a codified legal system that is complex and arduous, and which is consistently unable to simultaneously maintain the discipline and flexibility necessary to prevent the breakdown of values.

As the example of taboos illustrates, the aesthetic construction of order must be taken up anew everyday. "Everything which today seems to simply remind us of or seems to be *like* this struggle (the struggle with constricting ideas, with something bigger than life) is and remains this same old continuing struggle with the angel."[43] The inescapability of the struggle is a result of the fact that it must occur continuously within each individual in a community in order for moral ideas to survive. But while Strauß' insistence on the continuing significance of the struggle with the sacred is a valid response to the liberal attempt to deemphasize the importance of the sacred, his understanding of the terms of this struggle leads to serious problems in his political views.

Sacrifice and Scapegoat

Strauß claims that "the community is the truly mystical (deeply incomprehensible, most moving) human dimension."[44] But his vision of the sacred as the experience of the unexpected and foreign leads him to a specific notion of community based on the ideas of horror and victimization. In "Swelling Song of the Satyr" he discusses neo-Nazi violence as a breaking of taboos but also as a form of sacrifice. He explains the functioning of sacrifice not as sacrifice of material comfort in favor of spiritual convictions but as a violent victimization of a scapegoat, which serves to reinforce the belief of the community in its values: "In *Violence and the Sacred* René Girard writes: 'The rite is the repetition of an original spontaneous

42. Strauß, *Beginnlosigkeit*, *op. cit.*, p. 66.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

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lynching which guaranteed order in the community.' The stranger, the traveler is captured and stoned when there is unrest in the city. The scapegoat as the target of violence is never just an object of hate, but also a thing of worship: it attracts the common hate of all in order to liberate the community of this hate. The scapegoat is a metabolic vessel."[45] The scapegoat idea is based on the assumption that aggression constantly builds in a society and must periodically be released. If this excess aggression is not vented on a sacrificial victim or scapegoat, it will ultimately explode in a frenzy of violence which will destroy society.[46] Two difficulties with this argument are that the assumption of an ever increasing excess of aggression in society has never been satisfactorily demonstrated and that Girard ignores an essential distinction between scapegoat and sacrifice.[47]

Strauß suggests that neo-Nazi violence in Germany conforms to Girard's idea of scapegoating in that victims are chosen at random and not according to any particular guilt or distinguishing characteristics. As Enzensberger notes about the neo-Nazis, however: "Germanness is a slogan lacking content, while only serving to occupy the empty spaces in the brain. Just as easily as Turks or Vietnamese, the perpetrator could be 'bashing' cripples, homeless, the retarded, the elderly, or schoolchildren, or even, if he were not too cowardly to do so, West or East Germans, depending on the perpetrator's geographic location."[48] But Girard's theories notwithstanding, this neo-Nazi scapegoating does nothing to reinforce community values. Strauß admits this, but only because he believes condemnation of the neo-Nazis amongst the German people is not as universal as the condemnation of left-wing terrorism, to which he ascribes the status of successful scapegoating. Both instances of terrorism broke taboos. For Strauß, the earlier terrorism was successful because the entire population in Germany, in its unified rejection of violence, reaffirmed the

45. Strauß, "Anschwellender Bocksgesang," *op. cit.*, p. 205.

46. See René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), p. 31 and René Girard, *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World* (London: The Athlone Press, 1987), p. 26.

47. For a more extended discussion of these arguments concerning violence and aggression, see Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1969), pp. 61-64 and David Pan, "Enemies, Scapegoats and Sacrifice: A Note on Palaver and Ulmen," *Telos* 93 (Fall 1992), pp. 83-88. For a further discussion of these issues in connection with Strauß, see also, Peter Glotz, "Freunde, es wird ernst," in *Wochenpost* (February 25, 1993); and Eckhard Nordhofen, "Vor der Bundeslade des Bösen," in *Die Zeit* (April 9, 1993), both cited in Berka, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

48. Hans Magnus Enzensberger, *Aussichten auf den Bürgerkrieg* (Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp, 1993), p. 26.

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broken taboo: left-wing terrorism, contrary to its intent, "created a negative harmony in the rejection of horror."[49] Though Strauß criticizes left-wing terrorism for breaking taboos, he contends that its violence also led to a reaffirmation of values — a "negative harmony" in the face of horror. In this Girardian reading, violence is considered sacred because it horrifies horror, infusing a sense of morality into a community through fear and awe at the consequences of the breakdown of order. Even when Strauß describes the outbreak of right-wing terror, its horror has the same structure as that of an aesthetic event: "we fear it, we seek to prevent it with all our remaining powers, yet we have no secure means of defense when Bromios, naked horror, breaks into our abstract world, and the structure of simulacra and simulators, which seemed to stabilize reality so well, from one day to the next begins to crumble."[50] The inevitable breakthrough of the unmediated and uncontrollable horror of Bromios (one of the manifestations of Dionysos in Greek legend) is both Strauß' fear and wish to the extent that horror is the ultimate aesthetic experience and fear the foundation of moral order.

Against this vision of morality as a surrender to horror and fear, Kant defines the sacred and the moral as an overcoming of it. According to Kant's interpretation, fear cannot be the basis of morals or of the sublime because it is based on a concern for one's own physical well-being, whereas both morality and the sublime depend on a disdain for the physical in favor of a supersensible reality.[51] The experience of the sublime only originates with reference to an act of self-sacrifice. Individuals negate their physical being for the benefit of a value considered greater than the individual. But although sacrifice negates the individual, it also lends spiritual value to the individual through the linking of the individual to the ideal. As Enzensberger notes: "One must even ask oneself whether what one calls culture would be possible without this willingness to sacrifice one's own life."[52]

Unlike acts such as self-sacrifice, the scapegoat mechanism does not create moral values. Rather, it is the symptom and continuation of a total collapse of collective values. "When [the neo-Nazi] has a choice between Germanness and a motorcycle, there is no difficult decision. Since his

49. Strauß, "Anschwellender Bocksgesang," *op. cit.*, p. 205. I follow here Helga Kaußen's reading of this passage in "Der Sündenbock als Gärtner. Oder: warum verstiegenen Blöken nicht mit Begriffen beizukommen ist," in *Weimarer Beiträge*, Vol. 40, Nr. 2 (1994), p. 294.

50. Strauß, "Anschwellender Bocksgesang," *op. cit.*, p. 205.

51. Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 122-123.

52. Enzensberger, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

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future is unimportant to him, it is not surprising that he does not care about his own country either."[53] Scapegoating does not create morals but is a consequence of their disintegration, and such "sacrificial violence" cannot be the source of moral order. "Violence is by nature instrumental; like all means, it always stands in need of guidance and justification through the end it pursues."[54] In order to avoid instrumentalization, sacrifice must itself constitute the rejection of instrumentalization. It does this by enacting the moral act of self-sacrifice for a higher good. The creation of a distinction between the profane and the sacred is thus not prior to the moral act, as Strauß contends, but the essence of it.

Community and Nation

The sense of self-sacrifice described by Kant and Enzensberger, as opposed to Strauß' invocation of the scapegoat mechanism, only functions properly in face-to-face context. Enzensberger points out that it is important to "form a close tie between the helper and the needy. This not only allows a concentration of material and emotional energy. In place of abstraction, there is a concrete relation. Every attempt to help and to be aided brings unavoidable conflicts which can only be dealt with if the parties know each other."[55] Face-to-face contact is not only necessary for properly resolving conflicts, it also guarantees the legitimate functioning of sacrifice. As with taboo, a sacrifice for the community can only make sense if the individual has a concrete and everyday interaction with the people who are meant to be aided by the sacrifice. Otherwise, the sacrifice will become as abstract and destructive as the scapegoat mechanism, in which there is no concrete relation between victim and aggressor, and the victims are chosen precisely because of their foreignness.

The issue of concrete relations between people is the point at which Strauß' notions of the sacred and community deteriorate into a nationalism depending much more on scapegoating than on sacrifice. The community for Strauß is not based on everyday interaction but ultimately on the German language. "But today the idea of the German people (*Volk*) does not exist as a secret treasure in the soul of the individual, which could be the basis of his or her power. The German people is nothing more than a moody, complacent majority power; an extinguisher of all ideal force. It only speaks German out of laziness. Most of its impulses and interests

53. *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
54. Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
55. Enzensberger, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

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would be better expressed in American English."[56] By focussing on the German language, Strauß commits himself to an abstract idea of both community and culture. He assumes that by reading texts by Goethe or Kafka instead of watching movies by Coppola or Spielberg, the Germans could maintain a sense of both the sacred and the community. This literary and nationalist understanding of culture ignores the crucial significance of concrete actions and social relations for the constitution of a community. Taboos and sacrifices — the everyday expression and basis of community — are also the basis for the aesthetic significance of works of art. Once art is separated from this everyday context and defined in terms of the German language, it has moved from the self-constituting realm of community to the manipulated level of the nation. Instead of arising out of the taboos and sacrifices individuals negotiate with each other in their everyday lives, culture becomes fixed not only within a canon of texts, but limited to an attitude of passive reception.

The Aesthetics of the Nation

Strauß conceives of participation in culture not in terms of decisions and actions but in terms of a passive reception of the aesthetic. This understanding of culture whose goal is "to allow oneself to be overwhelmed"[57] is not only valid for the reception of poetry or music but also of social experience. The opening to "Swelling Song of the Satyr" describes in the third person an admirer of the complexity of society, which "must appear to every outsider, so long as he is not afflicted with a political malady, as an incomprehensible piece of art rather than as a boiling kettle, a 'hell of others'."[58] The individual does not relate to the group as a participant engaged in Sartre's hell of human interaction but rather as an outside observer.[59] As this passage suggests, Strauß extends the attitude of reception and submission beyond the relation to the work of art into the relation to a collective, thereby rejecting concrete human interaction in favor of the adoration of society as an aesthetic vision.

In his recent play, "Final Chorus," Strauß depicts this transposition of the aesthetic attitude of wonder into the social realm. The most prominent effect of this transposition is the immediate subsumption of the community within the nation. This subsumption occurs as a direct consequence

56. Strauß, *Beginnlosigkeit*, *op. cit.*, p. 122.
57. Strauß, "Aufstand gegen die sekundäre Welt," *op. cit.*, p. 37.
58. Strauß, "Anschwellender Bocksgesang," *op. cit.*, p. 202.
59. My reading of this passage is based on Kaussen, *op. cit.*, pp. 299-300.

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of Strauß' attempt to construct identity out of the sacred moments of "presence." The first of these moments occurs in the first act, in which a group of people stand before a camera in order to be photographed as a group. Instead of being constructed along acts of obedience, domination, and sacrifice, which occur between specific people tied together by their common context, the unity of the group is constructed in the scene as a photograph. While Greiner argues that the focus on a photographic document rather than on human interaction is meant as a critique of West German society and the aesthetics of representation,[60] the problems with Strauß' depiction lie in that he reinforces an understanding of community which has been subsumed under the idea of a German "*Volk*." The photographer's manipulation of the group into an abstract unity is repeated by Strauß when he situates identity within the group photograph.

The conflicts which arise in the scene — how individuals can be defined within such a photograph, who will choreograph and take the photograph, who might be left out of the picture — are all issues which can arise if community is conceived only as a nation. In this case, representation takes precedence over the mechanics of concrete relations, and in the scene the constant bantering of the group must stop and is in fact silenced by the snap of the camera at the end of the scene: "The Woman: If you would be so kind as to stop your conversation while I photograph you. *The Chorus begins to hum quietly. Darkness.*"[61] Talk gives way both to the picture and to the unifying hum, regardless of whether it is the professional photographer or the passerby who takes the picture. Like the cry of "Germany," which in the middle of the scene brings the group to silence and attempts to create one of the moments of "presence" in the play, there is no issue of direct interaction and sacrifice which would be the basis for the experience of the sacred. Instead, there is only a suppression of interaction for the benefit of a unifying because homogenizing moment.

The same lack of human interaction characterizes the second attempt to depict a transcendent moment in the play, when an architect searching in an apartment for his client opens a door and sees her naked in front of the bathtub. This "oversight" becomes an experience of sacred immediacy which structures the relation between the two for the rest of the act. Here the transformation of experience which Titania attempts in vain to enact purposefully by exposing herself in *The Park* is successful because the experience is accidental. Strauß describes such a moment in

60. Greiner, *op. cit.*, p. 252.
61. Strauß, *Schlußchor* (Munich: Hanser, 1991), p. 32.

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Beginninglessness as that of "blind passion" opposed to the Enlightenment tendencies of a love story. "Every woman can become a saint of desire when the fleetingness with which we gaze upon her leaves behind a heightened, clear imagination. When she becomes totally and absolutely present to us for a moment in this single point in time every adventure, every story, every word disappears like material beyond the horizon of events."[62] Instead of a moment of decision, and an embeddedness in everyday events, Strauß' construction of the basis of the sacred is a sudden, accidental and unexpected vision, as if the sacred were a random event. Once again, he elevates the abstract photographic moment to a sacred level. There is no concrete relation between the spectator and the naked woman. Instead, the situation of an accidental exposure creates the sacred as a random intervention of fate which transforms history.

In this construction of the sacred, the oversight exposing the naked woman is equated with the oversight which opened the boundary between Hungary and Austria leading to the fall of the Berlin Wall and the demise of East Germany.[63] These events are described in the third act of the play: "They're at the brink of chaos over there. They open the border today and close it again tomorrow. Simply as an oversight. Perhaps something will happen, merely because they are constantly confused."[64] The fateful intervention which changes history is disconnected from any human agency. Rather than an outgrowth of individual acts of rejection of the East German state system adding up to an overwhelming collective power opposed to the violence of the state,[65] Strauß constructs the fall of the Berlin wall as a consequence of the state's chaos and confusion, as if the "emergent" reality of revolution had come from above as a kind of divine intervention.

Instead of East German mass demonstrations, church gatherings, and mass exodus (all results of a collection of private decisions), Strauß chooses to focus exclusively on the East German government decision to open the borders. For the play, this is the moment that changes history and causes events to unfold. But in fact this primarily aesthetic moment in the play was much more a consequence than a cause, and the true history-making decisions lay in the private choices of the East German people, one by one withdrawing support from the government and risking their

62. Strauß, *Beginnlosigkeit*, *op. cit.*, p. 103-4.
63. Cf. Greiner, *op. cit.*, p. 246.
64. Strauß, *Schlußchor*, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
65. See Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 51-56, for a discussion of the opposition between power, whose effectiveness depends upon the consensus of a large number of people, and violence, which depends upon the implements of war.

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lives to defy it to the point that the government was no longer able to use violence against them because its soldiers no longer obeyed government orders. Strauß' decision to focus on the fall of the Wall as the history-making event which changes lives is perhaps a typically West German reaction to events for which West Germany remained a passive onlooker. Yet it is also an expression of Strauß' idea that history and the sacred are unexpected and therefore alien to individual action.

In addition to presenting history as spectacle, the final act also considers history as individual memory. Here, Anita struggles with her mother and then with Patrick, the historian, in order to determine the role her father played within her family history, on the one hand, and in German history, on the other. However, because the family drama concerning her mother's and father's loyalty to each other is merged with the national drama of resistance to Hitler, individual identity is immediately understood in terms of national identity. Though Anita's emotions within the scene are most excited by intimations of her mother's possible unfaithfulness to her father and vice versa, in the play these issues of personal loyalty within her family are not important in themselves but only insofar as they relate to the role the father played in national history. After the argument with the mother is abruptly interrupted by her departure to participate in the "fall of the Wall" celebrations, the argument with Patrick revolves around this historical role, and his reference to personal family history is regarded by Anita as "taboo."[66] But this taboo is a consequence of the overriding importance of the family drama for her psyche: she reacts violently to Patrick's suggestion that her father's main preoccupation was not with resistance to Hitler but with sleeping with the wives of Nazi officials: "*Anita stands up and strikes Patrick in the face.* 'You twisted, cold, dirty slanderer . . .'."[67]

Though for Anita the family drama is the primary site of memory and emotion, this drama is pushed aside at the end of the play by Anita's allegorical encounter with the eagle. The entire scene merges personal and national identity, which is precisely the problem of a German nationalism which links a concrete struggle between individuals with an abstract problem of what to do with an oversized German eagle. The obscuring of the family drama by the symbol of nation is the consequence of Strauß' preoccupation with aesthetic "presence" and national identity — to the detriment of the moral foundation of the sacred in which individual sacrifices define community.

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66. Strauß, *Schlußchor*, *op. cit.*, p. 93.
67. *Ibid.*

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The Political Imperceptible in the Essay Film
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Nationhood, Nationalism and Identity: A Symposium[*]

Telos Staff

Michael Taves: The four papers presented in the symposium on nationalism cover a large body of material, which can be approached in a variety of different ways. Consequently, the discussion need not be focused on any particular aspect and can develop in any direction the participants wish to take it. It should, however, remain coherent and somewhat linear.

Russell Berman: My comments in defense of the nation respond to a very particular political context, in which nationhood is under attack from various directions. The accelerated development of global economic relations entails a greatly heightened mobility of labor and capital across national borders. The political forms these processes have taken include NAFTA, GATT, and the development of a unified Europe (although all bets seem to be off regarding its future). In practical terms, this has led to dramatic changes in the social life-world, which is a roundabout way of talking about job losses, re-engineering, and lay-offs, as well as the corresponding other side of the dialectic: the new waves of immigration. Some of this may be necessary, especially within a free-trade context, and some of it may even be salutary, but it surely points toward a reduction in the significance of nationhood within the current global economic order. The corollary in

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* This discussion was held in the Telos Institute in Candor, NY, February 3, 1996. It followed the presentation of summaries of papers by Eva Geulen, Russell Berman, Magda Mueller and David Pan published in this issue of *Telos*. Included in the discussion was Manfred Wiegandt's book review on the "Konservative Revolution" published in Telos 104 (Summer 1955), pp. 175-191. Unfortunately, Eva Geulen could not attend and her paper was summarized by Russell Berman.

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Europe is the move toward a single economy with a single currency.

While the nation seems to be dissolving into a larger regional and ultimately universal framework, it also faces a different sort of challenge — an internal dismantling, exemplified best by the congressional Republican agenda to dismantle the administrative apparatus of the nation-state. Torn apart between global and local agendas, there seems to be little left for nationhood to hold on to. And in this context, cultural academics who insist that nationhood is merely imagined or invented only contribute to this dissolution.

In my talk, I have tried to show how, despite these "objective" economic settings, that nationhood is both constitutive of human experience and, moreover, a feature of identity that should be valued. I am sure the first claim will be attacked as "essentialistic" and the second as patriotic (or perhaps it will be treated as too close to Buchanan). The key claims are 1) the nation corresponds to a human condition poised between the finite and the infinite, i.e., always located in a particular community but capable of a transcendence of a universal scope; 2) the nation can provide an effective framework of solidarity, by which I mean the affective basis for obligation and altruism within a larger community; and 3) it is in and through the nation that certain particular historical experiences accumulate and are transmitted, so a loss of nationhood can only mean an impoverishment of the quality of our lives.

Let us turn now to the German example. I began with a discussion of Luther in order to demonstrate that concerns with nationhood preceded the era of nation-states in the late 18th century. But we can also focus on the constitutive role of language in the polemics for German nationhood during the early 19th century, i.e., prior to the existence of the Bismarckian nation-state.

Paul Piccone: The nation as a mediation between "the finite and the infinite" strikes me as a fifth wheel in a geopolitical situation characterized by the globalization of economic relations, on the one hand, and the growing importance of cultural particularity, on the other. As for the nation being the site of solidarity, it sounds *prima facie* admirable and desirable. On closer scrutiny, however, it turns out to be a false claim: today, when, for example, disaster strikes in some remote part of the world, it is not the nation that springs into action but the so-called "international community," i.e., the US and West European countries, through or independently of the UN. On a more pedestrian, everyday level, solidarity obtains along professional, ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, etc., lines transcending the nation, or at least having very little to do with it. As for certain historical experiences accumulating and being transmitted in

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and through the nation, it strikes me as rather arbitrary. Why choose "Germany," rather than Saxony or Bavaria, or even Europe, as the relevant geographical and political unit defining and sedimenting into collective consciousness certain historical experiences? After all, they all have identities as solid and even older than "Germany" — something Luther may have dreamt up to dodge taxes imposed by the Catholic Church, but certainly nothing more than an arbitrary geographical fiction able to accumulate historical content only through political seniority.

But let us deal with these problems systematically and start with the last claim about language as constitutive of nationhood. Clearly, national identity cannot be defined simply in terms of language. German is spoken also in Austria, parts of Switzerland as well as parts of other countries, without all these places constituting a single nation. Similarly, there are long established nations where more than one language is spoken. Modern philosophy — especially Heideggerian — has tended to place too much metaphysical baggage on language, to the point of making it the ultimate repository of culture. This, of course, is another expression of that abstract idealism which has lost touch with life and thus must endow the mediating symbols with properties belonging to what is supposed to be mediated. When all is said and done, language is probably best dealt with as merely an instrumental dimension. Clearly, it does tend to embody particularity, certainly not at the level of a codified *national* language where uniformity is attained precisely at the expense of particularity. If anything, it is dialects which embody particularity. As the experience of the past two centuries clearly shows, however, the first victims of the establishment of a *national* language are those very dialects and, with them, the cultural specificity they embody. At any rate, while occasionally difficult, it is always possible to translate one codified national language into another without necessarily losing any meaning. In late 20th century Babylon, communication is hardly ever a problem (even if *understanding* often is). Today, practically everyone speaks English. I find it very strange that you identify nationhood and language.

Berman: I find it peculiar that you construct an argument so parasitic on imperialism. The fact that you can use English everywhere, or the fact that two thousand years ago you could use Latin anywhere, or anywhere in the Empire, is only an effect of political organization. I am not identifying nationhood solely with language. I think Austria is now a different nation than Germany, despite their shared language, because of different historical experiences. This was not true 200 years ago, but it is true today. Nations are

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not eternal; they are not essential; they are repositories for historical experience and lived traditions, which include the likelihood of change over time.

Piccone: Then you have got to come up with something a lot better and more concrete than language to define nations.

Berman: Historical experience.

Piccone: Historical experience is much too diffused. There is the historical experience of Bavaria, the historical experience of Prussia, which often was an experience of Bavaria *against* Prussia and vice versa . . .

Berman: Right. But as it turns out, Bavarians and Prussians were side-by-side occupying Paris and running Auschwitz. That is part of the German historical experience. That is not just a Bavarian or Prussian story: it is a *German* story.

Piccone: Yet the Germans were also allied with the Japanese. Does that constitute a shared experience and therefore potential nationhood?

Berman: They did not fight side-by-side.

Manfred Wiegandt: Shared experience does not necessarily constitutes a nation. It is the other way around: there has to be some national bond already in order to generate that sort of experience, and it is not the only element.

Berman: It is just one element, just one example.

Wiegandt: I want to argue in favor of the regionalism argument. It does not exclude any nationalist feeling — especially the Hitler affair. I think nationalism has a unifying effect. That is part of the creative myth of a nation. The issue is just how to integrate the different regions. This is a much more problematic question in Germany than in the rest of Europe, for example, Spain, where regionalism has been suppressed. In Germany the federalist structure was kept alive, even during the Weimar Republic, which was a unified state under the dominion of Prussia. Yet it retained regional particularities. One might even say that, because Germany never really suppressed regionalism, national coherence was stronger there than elsewhere.

Gary Ulmen: That is correct. Regions or states retained a certain identity, and Hitler used this. He did not destroy these local identities. The Nazis exploited this variety in Germany.

Magda Mueller: The question here is what does this have to do with the idea of "nation" and what is the difference between national identity and nationalism. Is nationalist sentiment the same as nationhood?

Berman: Nationhood and nationalism are not the same thing. Nationalism is a particular ideological mobilization which may be good or bad in different situations.

Martin Bendelow: Is not nationalism almost the result of the fading of

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national identity — in the sense that people feel alienated and lost?

Wiegandt: Nationalism can lead to a nationalist feeling, but it can also exaggerate it. I would argue that regional identity in Germany, which is not as strong as it once was, does not exclude a national identity. If in the US one meets someone from Swabia or from Hamburg, it is immediately understood that they are both from Germany.

Mueller: This might happen if the American knows where Swabia or Hamburg are located. Otherwise an American would be just as happy with Europe — and, indeed, some Germans prefer to identify themselves as Middle Europeans. But in our context, the problem is not so much how a German is perceived but rather how a German identifies himself and what does that mean in terms of regional identity within united Germany or within a united Europe. Is regional identity so strong that it transcends national boundaries? If this is the case, where and how does it happen? Nations and national borders are artificial constructs often severing family relations and regional ties. This is not so much a problem of cultural particularities but one of regional identities dating back before national ones.

Another sign of strong regional identities in Germany are the Holocaust memorials and museums, as well as the "historical projects" seeking to establish a regional historical consciousness rather than a centralized one. The main question is, what happened in our community? Before 1989 everyone would say: "I am from" followed by the name of the particular location — Hamburg, Berlin or wherever. But after 1989, the answer became: "I am from Germany," because, all of a sudden, Germany became a political entity once again. Before that one would say: the Federal Republic or West Germany, but not everyone could identify with that. This would be an argument for national identity. But it has also to do with the Nazi or the anti-Nazi legacy, because one would identify not with Germany but with the particular city one was from.

Piccone: It might help to shed light on this discussion of the relation between cultural particularity and national identity by looking at the Russian situation. Stalin's nationality policies were precisely along those lines. Up to the time of Brezhnev, even to Gorbachev, all Soviet regions were always allowed the maximum possible autonomy. Thus there was, for example, the Ukrainian Society of Writers, the Uzbekistan Association of Intellectuals, etc. All were run by local people and were entrusted with articulating local customs, dialects, etc. Official policy was precisely to allow these regions maximum possible expression in order to reinforce a broad Soviet identity. It was a miserable failure: as soon as an opportunity

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arose the whole system disintegrated and truly regional sentiments resurfaced against any artificial Soviet identity imposed from a distant center.

Wiegandt: I think the point is that, if one asks a Ukrainian "are you Russian or Ukrainian?" the answer would certainly be: "I am Ukrainian." If the same question is posed to a Bavarian, he might still say he is a Bavarian, but he would never deny he is German.

Mueller: The question is not whether the Bavarian denies to be German, but where the person sets its priorities. In the case of Germany, this has to do with the legacy of the Holocaust. For my generation, it was very difficult to identify as Germans. We would rather identify with the region or the locality. Furthermore, there were the two German states, the FRG and the GDR, which also hindered an identification with a German nation. With the fall of the Berlin Wall, there has been a shift. After 1989, people have been much more inclined to identify themselves as Germans — maybe the chiseling down of the Berlin Wall was a patriotic deed, and maybe one can now identify with Germany as a nation whose citizens overcame a long hardship.

Berman: Germans did describe themselves either in terms of particular regions or as Europeans. This may have changed after 1989 and it is important to determine why. Part of it has to do with the history of federalism and regionalism, which is a positive aspect of the German national historical experience. But the other, of course, is the burden of the legacy of the Third Reich. One reason why Germans are among the strongest and perhaps last supporters of a unified Europe is because they may see Europe as a way to run from their own national history.

Piccone: Is that bad? That seems to be a very positive phenomenon. On the one hand, it establishes a broader identity, i.e., European, while reinforcing local identity and obliterating the opprobrium of the Third Reich. Within a united Europe, Bavarians are no longer limited to trading primarily with Hamburg or Berlin: they can now trade with Zurich, Lombardy or Slovenia. As old national borders fade, two other, more concrete identities develop simultaneously: local and continental ones. Within such a context, who needs a German identity anymore?

Berman: That is a fine way to save the *Oktoberfest* and avoid the specificity of German historical obligations.

Piccone: Like the Holocaust?

Berman: It is an erasure of specificity.

Mueller: A strong regional identity does not imply an erasure of specificity. By emphasizing regional identities, a regionalist does not necessarily want to disassociate from German or European history. At any rate, the

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erasure of specificity is impossible because, for example, when it comes to the Holocaust, there are signs everywhere indicating where there was a concentration camp, where a synagogue was burned down, etc. Today, the memory of the Holocaust is visible in every city. What does one do with these signs and memorials, to what extent can they be incorporated into an understanding of identity or non-identity? Discussions concerning the German nation and its implications for a united Germany and a united Europe have taken place within prevailing assumptions warning about a nationalism "made in Germany." In the absence of a German national consciousness, the FRG's DM-Patriotism was exemplary in its confusion and refusal to accept international responsibility. But this has changed after 1989.

Berman: The question is, to what extent would this historical consciousness be strengthened or diluted by an increased federalism. That is to say, if instead of Munich as part of Germany there was only the free city of Munich or the free state of Bavaria, with no national but only a European context, then would the relation of Munich to Auschwitz be any different from the relation of, say, Milan to Auschwitz?

Mueller: Munich's relation to Auschwitz will always be different since its regional history remains directly connected to Auschwitz, i.e., via Munich's suburb Dachau, the site of the well-known concentration camp.

Piccone: Why does national identity have to privilege a particular historical period, say, 1870 to 1914? Why not go back to 400 BC, to the Germanic tribes or the Roman Empire? That is also history. So why not identify Germany as part of the *jus publicum Europaeum*, as part of a broader European context? The argument concerning language determining identity would probably work in that context much better than the German language does for Germany, since Latin was the *lingua franca* of Europe following the establishment of the Roman Empire.

Wiegandt: I want to come back to another point: there is more self-consciousness among Germans to identify as Germans now. Some of this has to do with 1989 and the end of the Cold War. But is there a national identity? Is there a movement among intellectuals to create something new, or maybe recreate something old, to use national identity for redefining Germany's position in the world? Another question has to do with whether this is really something having anything to do with everyday Germans. Why are there nationalist feelings among normal Germans? Mueller mentioned that the most important problem is fear of foreigners. This feeling is really growing. My parents live in Duisburg, an industrial town whose suburbs are 80% Turks. They see Turks everywhere. It is impossible to argue with them

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rationally and say, "there are only that many, and in terms of numbers there are no more foreigners in Germany than in France, or England, or wherever." There is a real irrational fear of being overwhelmed by foreigners. The question is how can one deal with this.

However, is this really a sign of a new nationalist movement in Germany? I do not think so. Xenophobic sentiments not peculiar to Germany are exploited and reinforced by some circles (e.g., New Right intellectuals and even such a renown conservative paper as the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*) to create or recreate a deeper nationalist "consciousness." The unification or reunification of Germany raised the question of Germany's "new status." The crucial debate, however, was not the one that started then, but the *Historikerstreit* in the mid-1980s. Those who want to find a new place for nationalism in Germany must first separate it from the Nazi past. Since the Holocaust *did* take place, the only remaining option is to downplay and relativize (or *historicize*) Germany's past. Thus the *Historikerstreit* was a genuinely political debate. In this, Habermas was a devout "non-nationalist" who recognized this predicament. This explains his almost zealous criticism of Nolte and like-minded intellectuals. Even though I do not agree with the thesis of the "uniqueness" of the Holocaust, I think Habermas saw more than others what was behind the revisionist historians' campaign. The rising xenophobia in Germany may be something those German nationalist intellectuals are trying to utilize to popularize other nationalist goals among broad sectors of the German population — goals which would otherwise remain the minoritarian position of a few intellectuals.

Mueller: Wait a minute! The problem is real. Since unification, Germans have been confronted with growing unemployment (6 million unemployed in 1996). In addition, there has been increased migration, a substantial influx of asylum-seekers in the early 1990s and a growing re-emigration of ethnic Germans from East European countries. On top of all that, there has been overt extremist violence from both the Left and the Right, which in December 1992 and January 1993 resulted in more than three million people demonstrating against xenophobia and neo-Nazism . In today's Germany, the Holocaust is not regarded as an event that happened in a faraway place and in the distant past, but as part and parcel of German and regional history. In addition to signs pointing to several Holocaust memorials at former concentration camps, the Nazi period and the Holocaust are viewed as the most important aspect of the Third Reich and are taught in all levels of German education.

While the debate concerning the German nation is heated and emo-

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tional, all the hype boils down to a simple question: is the concept of nationhood viable for all states in Europe and in the rest of the world, including Germany — even though Germany's reputation has been irreversibly tainted by the Holocaust? If so, the moralistic claim that Germany has forever lost the right to be a nation no longer applies. What distinguishes it from all other nations is the Holocaust. Therefore, Auschwitz ends up conditioning every possible political position within Germany — be it within the debate concerning the Gulf War or whether to place German soldiers under UN command. Whether the nation is and has been obsolete, likely to fade within a European federation where the fundamental units are the regions is another question altogether, having little to do with Germany being regarded as a country like all others within the "international community."

Two additional points need to be made here. One is about national identity — the possibility for both East and West Germans to identify as Germans as a result of shared historical experiences such as, for example, tearing down the Berlin Wall. Prior to 1989, there was very little national consciousness in West Germany. Afterwards, there has been a change in the perception of Germany as a nation. As Brigitte Seebacher-Brandt — an ex SPD politician — put it: "Only those who exercise national responsibility can also aspire to international influence." In the late 1980s, this appears as something new, but it goes back to SPD positions in the late 1940s and 1950s, when Kurt Schuhmacher already advocated a strong nation. Now this is predominantly the position of intellectuals associated with what they call the *Democratic Right*. Today these views are being dismissed as dangerous right-wing baggage by a left-liberal media which conveniently chooses to forget the history of the Left in Germany in order to demonize their opposition advocating nothing more than what the Left itself once defended.

The other point concerns *fear*: fear of losing one's livelihood, fear of living in a community that is becoming increasingly alien to the very people who have lived there for generations. This fear can be seen in everyday relations among people. Is this fear warranted? Is Germany really being overrun by foreigners? Is there a difference between, for example, England, and Germany in terms of the amount of foreigners coming in? How many foreigners have been absorbed by England, and how many by Germany? Some figures here may help clarify matters. Bremen, with a population of 554,200, has had to absorb as many foreigners in one month as all of Britain in one year. After 1989, 17 million East Germans, most of them employed in the disintegrating economy, became part of a reunified Germany. They also had to be absorbed. There is an enormous amount of people coming from different

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cultures that have to be integrated within what was a predominantly rather homogenous German society. To evaluate some of the criticisms about xenophobia in Germany, as well as the significance of whatever nationalism may be resurfacing, which is inevitably associated with it, one has to put things in perspective. Germany's domestic security agency counted a total of 2,639 right-wing extremist acts of violence in 1992. Of these, 2,277 were directed against foreigners — an increase of 54% over 1991. By the end of 1992, however, the number of attacks began to drop. The figure for 1993 were considerably lower. In 1994, the total number dropped to 1,127. This in a country with a population of 81 million. Most people who commit such crimes are youngsters between the age of 12 and 20.

To the extent to which the international media tends to constantly recycle the past and focus on acts of extreme violence, it tends to provide an image of Germany as tethering on the brink of another National Socialist catastrophe, while in fact national identity does not seem to be all that strong. Thus the significance of regionalism and a broader European identity tend to be systematically underemphasized.

Florindo Volpacchio: What kind of fear do Germans have of foreigners? Is it a fear they are going to take jobs away from Germans? That they are strangers, undermine the community, they are poor . . .?

Mueller: What I was talking about is *not* a fear specific to Germans. In every community enlarged by non-native speakers there is the problem that neighbors cannot understand each other and their customs. There is also the fear of losing familiarity with one's *Umwelt*, the world of immediately-given everyday life. In Germany, the new members of the community include not only a considerable amount of foreigners but also many ethnic Germans, most of whom speak Russian and know only a few words of German. If a German city of twenty or sixty thousand is all of a sudden visibly changed so that the town square is now full of people who were never there before and who communicate in a language which locals do not know, it is understandable how it can be perceived as a threat. But that is not the only issue. Of course, there is also the fear that these newcomers are taking jobs away from Germans, and that Germans are expected to give large chunks of their social security savings to newcomers who have not contributed to it. Even though Germany has one of the strongest social welfare states in Europe, because of the massive influx of newcomers it has been necessary to make cuts in social welfare benefits. By now, there are six million unemployed in Germany, plus two million partly employed and on job training programs provided by the state.

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Despite all these effort, many of the people on these programs will probably remain unemployed. Germany has not had to deal with so many unemployed people since the worst days of the Weimar Republic.

Volpacchio: Does a community have the right to determine the kind of environment it wants to live in and whether or not foreigners are putting a strain on its resources and need to be kept out to maintain a certain level of living? Does a nation of people have the right to define their own borders and culture so that they can maintain their morals and standards — beliefs that define them as a people, keep their community stable and protect the kind of lifestyle they want? This seems to me a contradiction — especially in light of liberal democratic theory, i.e., that people have certain freedoms and natural rights to meet their own needs and desires, when in fact rights can only be exercised within a community.

Mueller: Well, this is not just a German question. Much more has to be clarified here. It should not be forgotten that one out of every fifteen Germans lives in one way or another off the state. That is a lot.

Piccone: One thing the discussion so far seems to have established is the artificiality or the normative dimension of identity. Clearly, there is nothing natural about "national identity." It is something constructed according to *certain* criteria, circumstances, events, etc., by arbitrarily selecting a particular slice of historical experience and hypostatizing it as the most significant one. In other words, what is crucial to decide is *which* particular slice of history is to be regarded as significant and which not. If one particular chunk of history is chosen, a certain kind of identity will result; if instead the focus is somewhere else, the results will be rather different. Therefore, the emphasis should be on which identity is desirable and then choose the history needed to validate it. Ultimately, consciously or unconsciously, that is what historians and intellectuals do when they focus, for example, on Luther rather than Barbarossa or Hitler, to legitimate a particular local, national or continental identity. From this perspective, then, what does it mean, at this point in time, to emphasize, glorify or hypostatize "German" identity? The kind of identity that should be privileged is the one David Pan emphasized: not one predicated on cosmic, global, continental or even national belonging, much less one based on race, religion, ethnicity, etc., but one having to do with concrete experience: face-to-face relations among people sharing a particular territory and therefore engaged in the creation and recreation of a living culture from whatever historical fragments they inherit from the past. It is not a matter of focusing on some arbitrary 19th century forms simply because those are

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the ones that have been chosen and successfully imposed by some particular intellectual elite and have led to some rather peculiar collective "historical experiences" having to do with *Lagers* and world domination, but of privileging the living dimension constitutive of concrete individuality within viable communities. It is a matter of deciding *which* history to appropriate. It is unclear to me why we should follow Ernst Jünger and privilege the barbaric experience of fighting and dying together in WWI and WWII trenches should be privileged here — especially in view of the fact that the Nazi catastrophe was largely the result of privileging a peculiar reading of the historical experience of WWI to reconstruct German national identity in terms of the infamous "stab in the back," Wilsonian perfidy, etc. History is never objectively given: it is always a construction — a choice involving a prior decision. The project today should not be to recycle the kind of victimological German identity so successfully deployed by the Nazis and the German Right in general in the 1920s and 1930s, but to go beyond the 1870s and focus instead on *local* historical experiences able to constitute concrete local identities which can subsequently be aggregated into ever larger federal units in Europe.

Berman: It is interesting, Paul, to hear you describe national identity as obsolete in the context of a world economy. In some sense, you are suggesting that national identity has been relegated to the dustbin of history, thereby in a sense demonstrating to what extent you are still buying into a notion of a progressive teleology in history. Moreover, your account is revealing because it shows to what extent your insistence on, let me say, subnational localism depends on the assumption that a borderless world economy — of NAFTA, GATT, Europe, Brussels — is already fully in place and is inevitable, without the possibility of any regional or national resistance to it. In a sense, national specificity is being sacrificed at the altar of the world economy and localism is the fig-leaf to pretend that specificity is being preserved. You say national identity is always invented. I disagree with you and Professor Hobsbawm on the invention of traditions. Of course, traditions include moments of choice and decision, but there is more at stake. There is a kind of layering or sedimenting of historical experience that is real — not just invented or chosen. One cannot choose the past, as if it were fully arbitrary, one cannot rewrite it unless one is a Stalinist. One has to live with the legacies of the past. Running away from national identity is often a way of running away from experience.

As for the issue of foreigners in Germany, several points can be made. First, more than any other modern state, Germany thrives on the global

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economy. I think an answer to one's parents is, well, if you are going to participate in a global economy then you have to accept the consequences: there is going to be labor mobility. Secondly, in regards to the fear of foreigners, Germans — in particular West Germans — can be proud of having built a democratic state, and if one does not want to go back to the situation under National Socialism then democratic norms will have to apply to everyone, including foreigners. The situation is exacerbated by the nation-state's tendency to distribute refugee populations crudely throughout various locations, but that is a critique of the centralistic authoritarian moments in that particular policy. Furthermore, questions of social welfare intensify the problem, but this is more a challenge to the standard position, i.e., the more citizenship is linked to social welfare costs the greater the likelihood of exclusionary *Ausländerfeindlichkeit*, simply because the presence of anyone within the community is going to lead to higher and higher costs. This is a contradiction the Left has yet to resolve.

But the issue that needs to be addressed is the cultural and the aesthetic one. The reason *Ausländerfeindlichkeit* can take on violent dimensions in Germany does not have to do with excessive parochialism, but with the labile character of German identity, which is the heritage of the postwar era. I do not think that the perpetrators of violence on foreigners are doing that because they have a strong German identity. In fact, they do it because they have a weak identity, and this has to do with the cultural construction of German identity — West German identity — since 1945. In other words, weakened particularism leads to xenophobia. Were it strengthened, it would probably lead to a more tolerant and liberal society.

Piccone: Let us go back to the question of historical experience. I find it surprising to have positions ascribed to me I could never possibly hold. While there certainly is history, it is not immediately obvious *exactly* what took place. There is no univocal history we can all immediately agree on by looking at the so-called facts. The past is very complex and heterogeneous, and can be reconstructed in different ways. Such historical reconstructions are always carried out from a teleological perspective — a perspective always involving a decisionist dimension, an implicit project and therefore a choice. All I am suggesting is that maybe we should think about whether we want to reconstruct history in such a way that we end up with German nationalism or the German nation, or whether we should think of it in terms of some other perspective — values, or a unifying element which may yield a different, more viable local identity.

What this boils down to, essentially, is that national identity has

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something to do with administration, with the state and with bureaucratic matters having very little to do with aesthetic experience, people's immediate relations with one another, or with real historical experience. It has to do with structures imposed from above, from Bonn or from state capitals, which are not only artificial but also, I would argue, undesirable.

David Ost: It seems to me that this discussion of nationalism is rather archaic. Choosing nations, selecting traditions, defining nations in terms of a set of traditions: what we are missing is how nations and nationalism are being thoroughly transformed by the global economy. For example, we can no longer understand nationalism by looking at local elites. Today's elites have left the nation for the global economy. This is obvious in Germany, whose elites lead the charge toward European unification. But even elites in what used to be called the "Third World" no longer need nationalism: they too can become directly integrated into the global elite. In other words, there has been a dramatic change in the *bearers* of nationalism. In the past, nationalism was the property of modernizing capitalist elites asserting predominance over "backward" regions, seeking to use the new state entity as the means with which to pursue capital accumulation. Today's elites, however, basing their claims on professional qualifications rather than ownership of property, get richer not by exploiting a territory they can call their own but by selling their knowledge on the world market. Today, nationalism is promoted not by the insiders but by the outsiders, by the poor schnooks marginalized by the world economy and seeking to hold onto their pride and dignity by basing it in those spurious traditions the elites have abandoned. The old elites do not need nationalism anymore. They leave it to the Pat Buchanans instead, and what the latter will use it for will not be a very pretty sight.

Volpacchio: There may very well be a conflict between multinational corporations and the nation, and the latter may try to oppose it. In the last five years, however, most transnational corporations have become very sensitive to national particularities. Fifteen or twenty years ago, it did not matter who ran a particular branch of a multinational corporation, as long as they had a degree from Harvard or the London School of Economics. These days, if multinational corporations are going to hire someone to run a bank in Hungary, they are likely to hire people with some understanding of local concerns and local interests. In other words, there has been an increasing sensitivity to local and national interests by multinational corporations precisely in order to defuse possible nationalist resistance.

Ost: Yes, General Electric now hires someone who knows Hungarian,

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ideally some Hungarian expatriate, to run its operation in Budapest, but that person has no more commitment to Hungary than does the corporate official in Schenectady. Today's global economy is full of multiculturalists who pay homage to particularities only in order to submerge them all into a smothering corporate unity. This is the new dialectic of what Benjamin Barber calls "Jihad and McWorld." Corporate liberals celebrate particularity in order to coopt it.

Berman: There is a line I would like to draw between my argument for difference and the multiculturalist version about race, class and gender. In current US discussions about difference, the features of difference are presented as not essentialist, always constructed, etc., and are usually seen as negative. For all their talk about difference, multiculturalists are ultimately humanists. Their goal is to demonstrate that underneath all differences there is a fundamental common core. That is why there are no multiculturalists who do not appeal to human rights. Yet, rather than seeing race, class and gender markers as deficiencies, as failings, one should recognize them as part of the human condition. Now, one can of course pretend that gender, race and class do not make any difference. Then one lives an impoverished life. One can deny aspects of the human condition and therefore live in reification. But I think resistance to reification includes nationhood.

Piccone: Nationhood *is* reification. Russell's critique of economic globalism is obviously on the mark, but it applies as effectively to the nation. The kind of homogenization and cultural impoverishment globalism brings about through the market is precisely what nations have been doing on a more limited territorial scale. National and local particularity are two qualitatively different things. The first is necessarily formal and limited, at best, to language, the legal system and a few idiosyncratic holidays such as the 4th of July and Thanksgiving. It is the New Class particularity of the national intelligentsia and of the bourgeoisie. Everything else is relegated to the local level, i.e., limited mostly to a geographical context within which interaction is primarily face-to-face, immediate and direct. Like globalization on an international scale, the nation seeks to flatten everything out on a national scale. Dialects, local customs, regional cuisines, particular traditions, etc. are either absorbed and deterritorialized within a national context (e.g., "French" or "Italian," rather than "Provençal" or "Neapolitan" cuisine) or else discredited as quaint premodern anachronisms.

Given the fact that it is Germany, rather than France or Poland, that is the focus of this discussion, I suspect Russell's account of the nation as protective of all particularities and local communities refers more precisely

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to the *federation*. In fact, given its history of political decentralization and federalism, Germany has managed to retain and safeguard local particularity much more than any other nation in Europe. Unlike "real" nations such as France, where Paris always decides, all culture is managed from the center and the state bureaucracy runs practically everything, federations can effectively apply subsidiarity and safeguard that kind of lived particularity Russell mistakenly sees the nation-state as defending.

Now, one can agree with Carl Schmitt's claim in *Verfassungslehre* that all federations, if they do work over a significant period of time, eventually become nation-states, precisely because of growing, shared experiences, the development of common customs, etc. Yet Schmitt's concept of the nation remains problematic, at least to the extent that he fails to realize that national centralization, predicated as it is on the primacy of the formal dimension, can never entirely substitute for local, informal particularity. As Marx argued long ago, the "people" is a fiction: there are only this specific group and that particular community. Being can never be completely captured at the conceptual level — the only one accessible to nationhood — but must operate also and primarily in that precategorical dimension obtaining as immediacy, direct experience and face-to-face interaction. Only when sedimented and internalized at that level does local particularity translate into traditions, customs and concrete personal identity. It then becomes that intergenerational cement binding a particular people as a people, independently of any broader political contingencies which from time to time aggregate them into various other artificial units.

Of course, modernity erodes these traditional identities but *cannot substitute* for them. Consequently, as modernity spreads and seeks to reduce all of reality solely to its formal dimension, so does neurosis, psychosis and other more fashionable psychological dysfunctions. As a paradigmatically modernist institution, the nation facilitates this erosion and therefore ends up increasingly crisis-ridden, while the federation, to the extent that it coordinates rather than substitutes sedimented traditional structures, successfully avoids modernist disintegration, without at the same time remaining marred within an anachronistic premodern framework. If by nation one really means "federation," with particular traits such as language, religion, race, ethnicity etc., then the differences here are only semantic in character. But then it is essential to distinguish carefully between the French nation and the early 19th century US or even Germany.

At any rate, in safeguarding traditional structures, the federation also provides a possible answer to the globalization quandary with which the

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Left — and Ost — is obsessed, but concerning which it has no clue as to how to confront. People with a strong sense of personal identity are least susceptible to the kind of manipulations which allow transnational corporations to exploit and destroy local economies. Well-established communities able to safeguard their autonomy within unintrusive but strong federations are usually best suited to resist transnationals and allow them to operate primarily in terms of local needs and expectations. At any rate, it is not possible to propose the primacy of the nation understood as a culturally and administratively homogenizing agency as an alternative to globalization because the latter is nothing but the economic extension and generalization of the former. The nation as traditionally understood in the 19th century, not only in the wake of the French Revolution, but also, for example, in the writings on the subject by people prefiguring such political units as Mazzini, Cavour, Proudhon and Bakunin, homogenizes, standardizes and flattens in exactly the same way globalization does. The kind of nation Russell talks about is really only a broader community.

Berman: The nation is not the alternative to the federation. The alternative to the federation is the nation-state: two of the possible political forms which the nation finds suitable, the nation being the repository of culture, history, identity and aspirations. You try to rescue the community by suggesting that it can sustain cross-generational obligations and a broader horizon that might transcend local egoism. But in the end you describe it as a site of face-to-face contacts that includes only those who are here, near, in the present, right now. It does not include people whose faces are not here, who are too far away or who are dead or unborn. All of that gets excluded in the body politic, which is simply constituted by who is there in the village square. That is a recipe for local egoism.

Piccone: Unfortunately "here" and "now" are two inescapable dimensions of Being. The past, the future and the far away come in only as defining conditions of what is here and now. The status of the past and of the future can never be the same as that of the present. Yet the way we relate is always mediated by the past, the future and what is not immediately present. The past is not something that must be reenacted day-in, day-out in, for example, religious rituals, nor is it something merely written in books and stored in the library. Rather, it is something we re-live every time we engage in interpersonal interactions, at least to the extent that our activities presuppose a whole series of cultural assumptions we inherit from previous generation.

Berman: But the face-to-face model only works if you assume that

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the faces always belong to people who are already well-developed traditionalist individuals with a strong sense of community obligation. In fact, that is often not the case. There are many people who are not traditionalists and who lack a strong sense of community obligation. They too will have face-to-face interaction and the nation represents the possible corrective of solidarity to their local egoism.

Ost: But how then is the nation to be salvaged when people do not have community, and when they themselves believe, or fear, that the nation is something obsolete?

Berman: The nation is the possible vehicle for enormous solidarity. How that might be implemented is a matter of politics and legal and economic structures. That may be Chapter II. But to applaud an erasure of nationhood and to substitute it with ideal-typical face-to-face contacts is highly problematic, unless you assume fully developed individuals with extraordinary historical consciousness. More likely, you just have local Babbits trying to divvy up the goods in terms of short-term profits.

Piccone: Being aware of traditions is not like consulting a book in the library every time one needs to refer to a particular passage. We are not always conscious we are even deploying them when we do. They are lived by speaking a certain dialect, behaving in a certain way, expecting certain things. Strangers learn soon enough what these cultural patterns are and usually have no trouble participating in them. Traditions are constantly being recreated, even though one is not aware of doing it. They are not abstract conceptual constructs we invoke whenever necessary.

Berman: But that is the easy claim to make, that they are not always conscious. The question is, are they *ever* conscious? Do they ever need a recheck? And if they do, do you seriously think that every little village is going to be able to maintain the institutions that will provide an adequate ability to recheck the authority of tradition?

Wiegandt: This argument explains why, in the end, localism cannot be the answer: for the same reason nationalism also cannot be the end, and one has to go one step further to universalism. The argument is as valid for rejecting localism as it is for rejecting nationalism. There must be some universal or at least a more global approach. This is why the rejection of universalism is, in view of the arguments against localism, not warranted. Localism seems to require a more national approach or a federation, because some problems can only be solved on a higher level. But the same goes for the national level: some problems cannot be solved at that level.

Berman: I am suggesting a form of cooperation among the sovereign

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states or the locales. It is not unimaginable that there might be some items on which international cooperation is needed. But the question is whether membership in a nation is obsolete, as Paul said, or regressive, as Geulen suggests. I think it is neither obsolete, although its possible to erase it, nor regressive. It is a vital and enriching component of human experience.

Taves: Perhaps the question is not so much whether the nation is obsolete or regressive, but whether it is vastly overextended politically and bureaucratically, thus resulting in excessive social controls. You seem to frame the question in terms of a radical opposition: the limits of face-to-face, ahistorical, egotistical self-interest, without any sense of shared experience going beyond the local or extending into the past, or the nation as an inevitable political formation for distributing and governing values, and for resolving conflict and differences. In the US in particular, there has been an overextension of the political wherewithal of the nation-state to govern localities, resolve differences, etc. Reintroducing federalism may be a way to reverse this overextension of the nation-state.

Berman: I have no objections to a political shift from a centralized nation-state toward a federation. That is absolutely compatible with everything I have said. The question is whether, in that process, one also gives up the concept of nationhood as I have defined it, as a repository of experience and history, as an intersection between finite and infinite aspects of the human condition, based on certain assumptions about the way people are.

Piccone: Then, why have you not emphasized federalism?

Berman: You have insisted again and again that nationhood is just a figment of the imagination of the nation-state. Yet it is vital to rescue nationhood within a federation, because nationhood, as much as it is under attack from both the Left and the Right, is a very, very important part of being human. Let me point out one of the particular consequences of the overextension of the nation-state that Michael just described. One of the consequences is not only an evisceration of local experience and a demontage of character as part of individuality, but also an evisceration of nationhood as an experience. Ultimately, the nation-state itself stands in conflict with nationhood. That is why Piccone's assertion that nationhood is just a function of the nation-state is ahistorical. It may have been at a certain point, although nationhood is prior to the nation-state. The centralized authoritarian state in the 20th century not only homogenizes and obliterates local identity, it also diminishes national identity. In a sense, what we need now is less nation-state and more nationhood.

Taves: Much of what today is branded as crude right-wing populism

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seems to me efforts to get back to that sense of nationhood.

Ulmen: Yes, because the nation and the state are not the same thing. The nation preceded the state. The state did not create the nation.

Piccone: Did the French nation exist before the French state?

Ulmen: The people existed before the French state.

Piccone: They were not "French."

Ulmen: Before the state came along what were the people living there?

Piccone: They were Normans, Britons, Basques, etc. They were not "French." As Eugen Weber convincingly shows, French as a national language and a collective culture was imposed in the 1870s. Before then there may have been the Gauls, but there were no French. The same goes for America and maybe even Germany, with its sharp political differences between Prussia and Bavaria.

Berman: The point is not that the understanding of nation might not change over time, but this claim that nationhood is just a 19th century artifact is a phantasm of late 20th century academics — a phantasm of late 20th century academics running away from the obligation to think through nationhood and patriotism.

Piccone: One can read Luther and discover that he talks about "the German nation." But what did he mean by it? Cicero writes about the *populus italicus*. One could then deduce (as Mussolini and the fascists did): "Aha! the Italian people and the Italian nation already existed around the time of Cicero!" But if one does a little more research it turns out that "*populus italicus*" referred primarily to the inhabitants of what today is called Calabria — a particular ethnic group having nothing to do with the Etruscans in what is now Tuscany, the inhabitants of what is now Northern Italy, or even my own ancestors, the Sabines, who had immigrated to central Italy some three millennia ago. Of course, today there are still people in Calabria and they probably consider themselves Italians. I suspect that something of the kind happened with Germans. The concept of the German nation is historically contingent and takes different meanings at different times. To identify Luther's notion of the German nation with the Federal Republic today seems a little disingenuous.

Berman: Your argument keeps returning to a fundamental presentism. You say things are different at different times, and therefore the situation in the present cannot be related to anything in the past.

Wiegandt: Russell is not saying things cannot change, but that the experience of nation should obviously be continuously valid throughout history.

Piccone: There is absolutely no evidence for that anywhere. Before

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the 18th century, one can find only some defrocked priest like Luther talking about "the German nation" in order to avoid paying taxes. The *jus publicum Europaeum* was a system of *states* and *not* nations. At any rate, no one in the 13th century talked about nations.

Berman: Why is it that everything you talk about reduces to a contraposition of ethnicity and nation?

Piccone: Because one has to do with immediacy, face-to-face interaction, particularity, traditions and customs, while the other is New Class mediation — the kind of modernist rationalization responsible for much of what is wrong today and likely to lead to an even worse predicament unless confronted with a concrete alternative. The nation is constituted by a mythology invented by intellectuals to totalize heterogeneous groups into a manipulable mass of clients susceptible to the kind of social engineering necessary to bring about various versions of *Brave New World.*

Taves: Paul, what constitutes mediation? Does it involve shared experience? What are the limits of shared experience? Obviously, American culture was not the same in 1910 and after 1918, and especially after 1945. The wars were critical in generating a common American experience. That experience is mediated by all kinds of other corporatist developments at the time, mass consumerism, etc. Does that common experience, which allows someone in New York to identify with someone in San Diego whom he will never meet, constitute meditation?

Piccone: No. With regard to the constitution of the mythology of nationhood, mediation has to do with the way intellectuals' univocally redescribe multifaceted events by emphasizing certain dimensions of reality over others so as to create a sense of transcendental purpose where a number of alternative accounts may have been equally accurate — although resulting in rather different kinds of "historical experiences." Just look at the way American anarchists described WWI: a colossal carnage rather different from the the official ideological version of "the war to end all wars" or the "struggle for democracy." Soldiers fighting in the trenches do develop particularly strong bonds and a sense of common purpose — as Jünger, Mailer and scores of other authors have eloquently described. But while these experiences have great personal meaning for the particular people involved in the fighting, they have no intrinsic transcendental value and often do not go beyond the biographies of those who lived through it all.

Taves: But that sense of purpose does not die when my father dies.

Piccone: What does *really* happen? When these people went back to the Bronx, to Alabama, etc., the shared experience began to be diluted.

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After 10 or 15 years, it remains only a memory.

Taves: What is "only a memory"? What does that mean?

Piccone: Concrete realities reassert themselves. Remember *The Ugly American* — a book extremely popular a few of decades ago? It begins with the aura of these shared experiences, but then what happens? As new realities and conflicts unfold, the earlier friendship gives way to anger and hate.

Taves: It is too extreme an argument. It is not true that nothing is left.

Piccone: In the narrative, they are ready to kill each other.

Taves: There are threads of a common history, however far it extends throughout a region, however it is defined, for geographical reasons perhaps, that define a person as an American, a German, etc.

Piccone: But the relation to someone in San Diego is certainly a lot less important to someone in New York than, for example, relation to the next door neighbor. Torontonians are certainly more important to Buffalonians than San Diegoans. With the guy next door or in the next city there is practically a continual interaction, which leads to common experiences. So, after 10 or 20 years, the relation with the neighbor becomes a privileged one — which certainly is not what happens with some other "American" living in San Diego.

David Pan: It does not seem to me that Russell's and Paul's positions are that far apart. Both accept the fact that there is a level on which people build identities through day-to-day interaction. Obviously, this day-to-day interaction will be remembered later on. But there seem to be two levels of interaction. There is this day-to-day level and there is also this national or federal level of interaction. In terms of political organization, Russell's construction of the national level seems in fact to be virtually indistinguishable from Paul's notion of the federation. The crucial difference is whether culture is to be constructed on the local or on the federal/national level. While Paul opposes an independent culture developing on the federal level because it tends to erode local culture, Russell embraces this federal — or in his terms, national — culture because it opens up local culture to a dimension which transcends local — that is, selfish, parochial — interests. Because the nation is the only viable unit of defense against foreign enemies, a national culture is necessary for creating the sense of shared sacrifice which would enable a common defense. Yet, I would agree with Paul that this type of national political unity in crises has little to do with the type of identity construction carried out by culture. The repository of human experience, of history, cannot really be the nation. It has to be individual consciousness, because a nation cannot remember

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anything. People remember. Starting from that, I think the way a particular person deals with the past is on an immediate level — with one's parents first, then the parents of his or her parents, etc. Their children will also have some kind of relation to the greater political unit, to other Americans.

Bendelow: To the community, also, in which they live and they feel to be an integral part.

Pan: Yes, of course, the surrounding community is crucial. There will be different loyalties, but what is really very important as far as constructing culture is concerned is the point of departure. Either one takes individual consciousness as the starting point for this construction of loyalties and the constitution of the past and the future or, and this is what Russell seems to be arguing, one takes the nation. In that case, it seems one is really dependent on a situation in which abstract individuals are disconnected from a particular local (for example, family or church) situation. Russell's concept of the nation as a repository of human experience really depends on abstract individuals detached from family ties. Luther's call for German national unity is in fact a call for a political confederation against the Catholic Church in defense of the local construction of values. The goals and presuppositions of German national unity were not tied to a German national culture but merely to common political interests — interests which could just as easily have crossed national lines. For Luther the finite and the infinite do not meet in the nation, but in the individual, whose personal faith is the basis for the construction of religious communities. By arguing against a separation between spiritual and worldly authority, he argues that the carriers of culture — the true priests of Christianity — are not ordained by a church hierarchy nor by secular German authorities, but in a sense ordain themselves through faith in Christ. Luther's primary message is that any Christian is potentially a priest and that culture is formed within an individual's consciousness. Likewise, what I see as the key to the problem of culture is the discussion of the location where the construction of human experience and history takes place. In my paper on Botho Strauß I try to show how Strauß' construction of a national culture is necessarily based on an aesthetics of representation in which national symbols — such as the German eagle — suppress the types of concrete familial conflicts which are the primary fabric and substance of people's lives. As opposed to such a national aesthetics of representation, a local culture is based on an aesthetics of mimesis. I borrow this term from Adorno to designate a kind of aesthetic experience which is non-representational and transformative. The task for a local culture, for

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example in a family, is not to represent the family as a group to its members or to those outside the group, but rather to transform individual experience in such a way that the patterns of experience of each individual conform to patterns of perception and behavior which precede the individual and activate the family as a functioning unit. Aesthetic experience and practical experience are inseparable in such a mimetic aesthetic because in a local cultural system the daily construction of values is dependent on myths and rituals (and therefore aesthetic) on the one hand and essential for the practical execution of everyday tasks (and therefore functional) on the other hand.

Berman: I agree with most of what you said. Part of it, however, I thought was an interesting misreading of one side of my argument. Nothing I said was meant to convey that the nation or the federation would have political priority over the community. That is a discussion we really have not had yet. I want to rephrase something you said: it is not so much that culture is formed within the individual but that the individual is formed within culture. We have not talked about family, but I agree with a lot of what you are suggesting, and that is not incompatible with what I was talking about as location. I do think, however, that, especially in the US, when faced with the situation where there are lots of broken families and lots of broken or eviscerated communities, one cannot imagine that one can recreate things *ex nihilo* by invoking some kind of populist localism when those locales have been annihilated. While one can imagine strong aspects of cultural formations in family, local and regional levels, for the reasons I have suggested in my paper there is a possibility of having a strong component of cultural formation take place at the national level. This does not necessarily take place. However, it can take place and that would be desirable and should not be repressed in the name of international multiculturalism or misplaced localism.

One could imagine a kind of emphatic localism, whether or not one maintains a federated or centralized nation. Let us wager that teaching children to read is a good thing. Should the cultural participation of these students in schools be built only by reading local authors, i.e., Bavarian children only read Bavarian literature, Swabian children only read Swabian literature? Children from this or that village only read literature produced in this or that village. That would be a kind of parochialism that would be authoritarian and repressive in the formation of consciousness. There are great works available in German, written by Germans and translated into German, and there is no reason why one has to construct localism as parochial. But that means participating in a larger national,

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cultural discussion. It is good that children learn to read Goethe, Mann and Kafka, and it is good that Bavarian children get to read Mann, who comes from Northern Germany. I think it is good that Bavarian children get to read Shakespeare, who does not even come from Germany, etc. Similarly, it is good that Bavarian children learn other languages. This is a major advantage Europeans, especially Germans, have over Americans, who do not learn other languages. That is evidence of a bad parochialism in the US. And I think that if one takes a populist localism in one direction, one runs the risk of a kind of know-nothing blindness to the world.

Piccone: I want to make two quick points, concerning the role of the nation in substituting for disintegrated communities, and of the nature of local education — especially in 19th century America, well before local communities, especially rural ones, underwent erosion and disintegration. It is ironic that Russell qualifies his account by proposing to have the nation substitute for the family and the community only in a situation of objective disintegration. That is how the state and the bureaucracy in the US has always grown: under the pretense of the being the last resource in an otherwise hopeless situation. The bureaucratic apparatus is never allowed to grow in a healthy situation — only when it is a matter of people starving, children being abused, women being battered, etc. That is precisely that phenomenon the first generation of Critical Theorists, in their first major study on *Autorität und Familie* in the mid-1930s, identified as the source of the kind of authoritarianism which made possible the rise of Nazism and fascism. According to that account which, notwithstanding excessive reliance on questionable psychoanalytic mythology, remains very convincing, in the absence of familial authority undermined by capitalist relations of domination, the individual does not attain *Mündigkeit* and remains in a state of permanent adolescence, desperately looking for substitutes for the missing authority figure (the father). The state and the dictator successfully fill the place of the absent father figure, thus facilitating adherence to authoritarianism regimes. (Hannah Arendt proposed a less sophisticated version of this analysis when she blamed imperialism and most 20th century barbarities on roughly the same process of social disintegration). Today, after fascism has become a closed historical phase relegated to the past, this phenomenon of stunted individuation as a result of familial and community disintegration results not in what later, in the late 1940s, was successfully marketed as the infamous "authoritarian personality" (an ideological construct meant to discredit as "pathological" any kind of non-conformism), but in state-dependent individuality

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— the kind of personality able to function only under the benevolent supervision of a thereby increasingly overburdened welfare state. Far from being a solution, this is a large part of the problem, and I do not think it helps to mystify the process by substituting the nation for the state or the nation-state. The result is the same. The only possible alternative solution seems to me to be voluntary associations and private groups — first and foremost, religious organizations with no hidden secular agenda. A couple of years ago *The New Republic* ran a piece on the Salvation Army arguing, surprisingly enough, that it was the only kind of welfare system that seems to work. There are many other similar organizations, which succeed precisely because their intervention is personal and face-to-face, instead of being mediated by impersonal bureaucracies interested only in meeting formal requirements. But this is a long discussion which will have to be taken up at another time. . .

As for the alleged provincialism of local education, such was definitely not the case in 19th century America, before the post-Civil War deployment of compulsory education, when local rural communities were responsible for the education of their offsprings. Latin and Greek were greatly valued and there was a thick network of private organizations devoted to the study of the classics throughout the mid-west — at that time still largely in a state of wilderness.

Berman: It is *presently* true. Part of my insistence that one has to worry about the potential for parochialism in localism is based on an assumption that imagining human interaction on whatever level — local, national level, or international — can lead to some kind of perfection or complete identity is itself a mistaken humanism and secularism. Human interaction on its own is much more limited and caught up in structures of mortality than people like to imagine. One reason why we must work to correct the complacency of localism is because localism imagines that in face-to-face interaction one can construct an adequate culture. There is no such thing as an adequate culture and that is why one has to look to larger and transcendent horizons.

Pan: I do not think anyone here has argued for a local culture constructed as reading just writers from one's city or one's state, but rather thinking about how those types of decisions are made. There should be a possibility within a nation for different types of education. They should not all be mandated through, for example, "national standards" by a national authority, somehow dictating what the national culture will be. Decision-making about what culture is would have to occur on the local level.

Berman: The decision-makers who ought to be primarily local in the

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sense that Paul has argued are themselves both local and national, because they are members of nations. I am not arguing for a strong nation-state: I am arguing for a strong national consciousness. And I do not see that a strong national consciousness necessarily implies a strong nation-state. In fact, as I have tried to suggest before, currently a strong nation-state obliterates a strong national consciousness.

Bendelow: That is certainly the case in Switzerland, the one country where there is a strong sense of national identity, despite the differences between the cantons and four different ethnic groups who hate each other. Switzerland, however, does not have a nation-state: only a confederation.

Piccone: It is not *national* but *federal* identity.

Bendelow: Another question has yet to be discussed and it has to do with how, in fact, this national or federal identity has changed over time. . .

Ost: Is the "nation" really, as Berman says, opposed to the state? Historically, in the US, "nation" has been inextricably linked with the state, with "manifest destiny" and the state-sponsored conquest of the continent. Only today is nation being redefined away from the state. "Nationalism" today is coming to mean what it meant in Yugoslavia in the 1970s: taking power away from the center and giving it to the local units. This devolution of power, this "new federalism" or whatever one calls it, is being done today precisely in the name of Americanism, in the name of nationalism. We are heading in a direction of a multiplicity of states each claiming to be the "real" America. Whether these units have any authenticity is doubtful. Massachusetts and Rhode Island did mean something specific at one time. Today you know you have crossed the border only if you have seen the sign.

Berman: OK, it is impossible to predict the outcome of the Congressional discussion concerning devolution and leaving medical or welfare policies up to the individual states. But assume that will happen. As you point out, those 50 states are often rather artificial. Their artificiality is particularly highlighted if we recall how mobile the American population is. People talk to each other and watch the same homogenizing media. So that population has an awful lot in common, whether in the US or the 50 separate states. This does not mean that there are not lots of differences, and indeed the size or space can vary significantly. What "local" means in Rhode Island is very different than what it means in Wyoming. In the South there is a strong sense of regional identity and some parts of the population may be less mobile than others. But imagine that the devolution to the states really took place, and imagine that the population were not mobile, or ceased to be mobile. In *none* of those 50 states are interpersonal relations

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primarily face-to-face. We could imagine a separation of these 50 states into 50 nations, but we would still have to face the Berman thesis that one has to theorize a political and cultural unit bigger than face-to-face localism — in fact, much bigger than face-to-face localism, even in Rhode Island.

Piccone: That would be the federation . . .

Ost: You are talking precisely about 50 new nationalisms. So much for the national tradition! Today we have a situation in which nations are based not on traditions but can be created — imagined — in a flash.

Berman: I am not saying that. I am saying that the reduction of human politics and culture in the localist mode is simply inadequate. It is just an unrealistic description of what is going to happen. If it takes place, there is still a lot of substance in what would then be the prior American nation — the erstwhile, the obsolete American nation, as Piccone would call it. Can those memories be repressed? Sure, people are good at repressing. Does that make us better? No. It means that you would break off ties to friends who moved to San Diego 10 years ago because all of a sudden they have California passports and they cannot export their goods to New York. Is that a gain?

Piccone: Why can locals not be cosmopolitan also? What would prevent locals from studying Arabic or Chinese folklore, or . . .

Bendelow: Or be members of the Internet.

Piccone: Yes, be members of the Internet. Why do locals somehow have to be illiterate yokels who speak only one particular dialect?

Bendelow: Now we are finally coming to the crucial definition of what is local, what is a community. Essentially, a community is a group of people who have had to weld themselves together in jointly shared tasks that have to be carried out. Therefore, it is proximate and territorial since men live in a place. What roots men in their daily lives is the place, the community in which they live and participate in the tasks of governance, both formal and informal, which make their community function. That combination of rootedness and participation brings with it further participation in friendships, enmities, associations and so on which weave themselves together and over time give that community a "bank-balance" of values, experiences, taboos, rituals and so on. This is the glue of the community and what develops social instincts that must be in equilibrium with egotistical instincts. Without this equilibrium, people become the alienated, egotistical, unhappy islands that modern Western men often reveal themselves to be.

But increasingly, in the modern world, say the critics, one must take into account mobility. In fact, this changes little where communities actually function. Families, individuals can move on and others take their

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place, houses are bought and sold, let and relet. But the place, the community, with its institutions, traditions and history goes on. In any case, the territorial community is only one of the contexts in which people function. As modern life has increasingly provided more opportunities for mobility, people become members of all sorts of voluntary associations and networks fulfilling their needs and desires. In a postmodern world characterized by a great deal of mobility, people ever more desperately need a sense of "home," of roots. And that does not mean simply having a house or an apartment, but belonging to a community.

Wiegandt: But one cannot simply downplay what high mobility entails. It is unlikely most people will end their lives where they were born. Even if someone grows up in a small community, at some point in time he will leave that community, maybe for good. This community may be large or small, have absolute autonomy in cultural affairs, dictate what is taught in schools, etc. It is a kind of dictatorship, because one may need to learn things one has not learned in that community, which may make a lot of sense to him. No one should prevent that. But if very small units are given a lot of autonomy, they may be able to make children learn selectively.

Piccone: What is wrong with that? Who should decide what children learn? The state, i.e., a bunch of mercenary bureaucrats making a career out of telling other people what is good for them on the basis of some bogus universalistic culture inimical to the living culture of the people on which it is imposed? Which one is the real dictatorship and which one is the democracy: people themselves making their own decisions — even if wrong — or a bunch of unelected New Class intellectuals deciding what is best for all children? Do bureaucrats with Ph.D.'s in "education" — that academic junkyard hardly worth being part of a university — really know better than parents? Anyway, children are an extension of their parents, not abstract individuals who become the wards of the state as soon as they are born. Who is this "state" and when did it receive this authority to do all this, and from whom? What kind of culture will this state sanction: the particularistic culture of people in flesh and blood living in local communities or the abstract universalism of the bureaucratic elite hypostatized as "absolute truth"? Why should one's children be forced to be indoctrinated into a foreign New Class culture rather than to that of their ancestors? Who should decide?

Bendelow: This, however, is a false dichotomy because, of course, communities are not islands. They have to engage in trade, cultural exchanges and other relations with other people.

Berman: So they are mediated.

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Wiegandt: But they can be restricted. People can decide that they do not want some particular subject to be taught. Let me transpose the discussion to Germany. There might be communities who could argue that: "We do not want to hear anything about our Nazi past. It is none of our business. Our children should not learn that."

Piccone: So? What is wrong with that? Freedom is, first and foremost, freedom to make mistakes and do stupid things as long as, of course, one is willing to bear the consequences. In the case of some German communities who refuse to teach their children about the Nazi past, these children may grow up ignorant or, worse yet, as Nazis, thus facing ostracism, censure or even violence from other communities.

Wiegandt: I think that is wrong.

Berman: In the case of the children in that hypothetical community who would not be allowed to learn about the Holocaust, I think that would be a wrong decision, because wherever they go in their lives they are going to be Germans and people are going to be interacting with them in a certain way and a whole lot of that is going to be based on knowledge about WWII, etc. Now, it is surely possible to keep people stupid, but I do not think that it is a good idea; however, whether the state is called upon to intervene in order to prevent stupidity is the question at the core of our political discussion. In the wake of the Enlightenment, the state expands in order to prevent wrong choices, but some would argue that the expansion of the administrative apparatus usually ends up making matters worse.

Taves: Let us go back to what Martin was saying: no communities are islands unto themselves. They all interpenetrate one another in trade, culture, etc., especially in the modern world. If a bordering community makes a decision — if the parents next door make a decision that seems terribly stupid and counter-productive even to the welfare of their own children, one will not remain silent. The community, the families or simply the members of the body politic will exercise their right to voice their opinion, boycott, practice ostracism, denigration and, in the most extreme cases, even deploy physical violence.

Piccone: When all is said and done, the question remains: Who is the "state" to have this power?

Wiegandt: Your problem is that you look for some base. And you see the local community, an imagined "face-to-face community," as this last anchor. Is that so different from seeing the individual as this last "absolute"? At least the individual can be defined much more flawlessly than the "community." You apply everything liberals apply to the individual to

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the community. This community may make its own mistakes without interference from "some higher authority," such as the state. It may have almost total autonomy. But in the same way that the autonomous individual is a fiction, so is your autonomous "face-to-face community." Most non-libertarian liberals, social democrats, but also Christian liberals, have long realized that individuals are not autonomous, that they are part of larger communities. They acknowledge that individuals have rights and obligations toward this community, and that is not necessarily only the local community. In an environment where the economy is not regional, but at least national and often international, one cannot seriously think he can attain self-determination by making most decisions on a local level. Members of the community may have the illusion of being autonomous, but while cherishing that illusion, other, more powerful and uncontrolled forces are the ones that determine their lives. Thus, your localism, and I do not object to subsidiarity, is bound to misjudge which are the real power centers. Localism does not produce more self-determination, but allows other forces to develop even more unhampered power to deal with you as an object. Thus extreme forms of localism which polemicize against the state and its agencies for allegedly exercising too much power, play into the hands of "private" powers even less controllable than the state or not controllable at all. This does not make your question concerning the nature of that state with power over you irrelevant. One is willing to delegate power to some larger body, as long as one receives something in return that justifies being subordinated to that body.

Taves: Well, one of the things one loses is autonomy of decision . . .

Ost: But is this not just a level of degree? In the end, there are rules, and as far as that goes it does not matter whether the rule-maker is the local school principal or the bureaucrat in Washington

Taves It makes a *huge* difference.

Piccone: It is an *immense* difference: what is at stake is the choice between grass-root democracy and New Class administration. If Americans were really satisfied with the latter, why bother with the American Revolution in the first place? Why not let the King's representatives from London run things. They were certainly no worse than their modern counterpart in Washington!

Ost: Well, it is still necessary to decide what the rules will be and who is going to enforce them.

Taves: The main difference concerns who is going to be enforcing them. The principal, I can talk to. The Department of Education in

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Albany or Washington, I cannot.

Bendelow: I want to go back to a comment that has passed unchallenged. That communities are terrible things because they are stifling is a peculiar intellectual position. Communities *are* repressive, and they need to be. The building of taboos in society over generations is precisely what keeps man from the worst part of his nature. The response to intellectuals and others who dislike what they see as the closed or repressive side of communities is that they have feet and can live. When confronted with this choice, intellectuals usually end up bringing their children up in these so-called stifling communities.

Berman: That is unrealistic: people are rarely free to up and leave over every dispute. In fact, it is precisely this problem that has contributed to the expansion of the federal government: it intervenes in local communities in defense of individual rights and against the presumably repressive character of local — city or state — regimes. The paradox in the US is that the power of the centralized state has expanded precisely via the enforcement of individual rights that were initially intended to restrict the power of government. In any case, there has to be a better alternative than just the recommendation that one leaves a community.

Bendelow: One does not have to do that completely. One can do those things the community forbids outside the community, while at the same time arguing within the community to persuade fellow members to change their ways.

Berman: But that model presupposes that somehow these substantive communities are possible and that unlimited persuasion is allowable. Therefore, if there is going to be free speech, the substance of the community is gradually going to be challenged and eroded by alternative myths.

Taves: Alternative myths of race, class, and sex are unavoidable. Those are the facts of life within practically all communities. It does not presuppose any equality or ideal speech situation for a community to be autonomous and self-governing.

Berman: That kind of community, which may not be that bad, is ultimately not compatible with sanguine individualism. Either there are strong and substantial values or there is free speech and a pursuant critical discourse.

Bendelow: No. You can have both because values are not fixed and immutable. Values can evolve over time . . .

Piccone: Of course. The community is governed by these seemingly timeless traditions, customs and habits which, however, constantly undergo subtle but significant changes in the process of being reproduced

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and relived. That is precisely what keeps these traditions viable.

Ost: To get beyond that, what one finds with the concept of nation is the ability to somehow move beyond immediate concerns to a bigger sense of community — some bigger ideal that binds me to other people beyond immediate relations.

Piccone: You are not talking about the nation, but the ten commandments or their functional equivalent.

Berman: But religion and the nation are intimately interconnected. Now, to be clear, the issue is not separation of church and state, nor the question of religious pluralism. The issue is that religion — understood as the human experience of transcendence, from which certain consequences follow regarding mortality, community, and the possibility of faith, etc. — is the frame within which a discussion of political forms, including nationhood, becomes possible. The problem with your localism is that it is the result of presentism, a reduced history, given the phenomenology of the face-to-face encounter. There is no sense of these participants in local communities as somehow being created and therefore limited, and there is no sense of ultimate judgment. The result is a secular and humanist account.

Piccone: What happens in communities with 17 different churches? 17 different religions? How can the nation deal with that other than by sharply separating church and state, while relegating national identity solely to a secular adherence to the constitutional rules of the game? I do not mean to recycle paradigmatically liberal aberrations such as *Verfassungspatriotismus*, which ends up marginalizing all religion and tradition to a private and therefore "irrational" sphere. But if religion and tradition are to remain central in community life and it is not only impossible but also undesirable to impose one particular religion and tradition over all others, then we should forget about the homogeneous and homogenizing nation and start talking instead about federations within which a number of relatively autonomous communities can coexist side by side. Anyway, that is the only way to salvage both a broader collective identity and local autonomy in religious and traditional matters. Otherwise, what results is the kind of mess we have today in the US, where the "federal" government is effectively a "national" one and in trying to function as such must either destroy all particularity and otherness, or trivialize it into meaninglessness multiculturalism . Religious neutrality is itself a religious position and, therefore, not different from and superior to other religious positions.

Berman: You are speaking like Frederick the Great, an oddly enlightenment stance for you. OK, we can agree to posit situations like the US

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where there is a plurality of religions. But that is not the point. The point is, does your analysis of community reflect on the created character of the subjects? Your moment of the face-to-face encounter bears the whole weight of community history, and it seems to be a rich enough source to produce all necessary cultural forms. I think that this may overstate the generative capacity of spontaneous interaction. One way to expand the model is think through the role of institutions; another is to reflect on human limitations.

Piccone: Every community must deal with transcendental questions somehow or other, and usually they do it through their religion. The relation between the finite and the infinite is always the domain of religion. That is very important, because it provides standard answers worked out over generations to very difficult questions. If one had to reinvent or rethink through all that it would become impossible to ever make sense out of anything. Communities do have their own institutions and usually are quite aware of limitations. Face-to-face interaction is only the locus where all of these things come into play: traditions, the past, the future, the new, the old, etc. What you call "presentism" in no way rules out "pastism" or "futurism": it only activates all these other often hidden dimensions in what the Marxists used to call "praxis" and some fascists of the Gentilean variety called the "act."

Berman: Do you not accept the fact that you abide by certain moral principles and behaviors that are fixed, certain rules by which you think you have to interact with other people?

Piccone: Human beings grow into communities with certain moral rules — *Sittlichkeit* — which are unreflectively internalized.

Berman: That is exactly the problem. There is no room for religion, no room for reflection on transcendence in your kind of community. You just said that humans grow into communities unreflectively . . .

Piccone: Yes: they grow into religion spontaneously . . .

Berman: There may be a spontaneous capacity for religion, although I can think of counterarguments to that claim. But it is surely the case that enacted religion results from institutions that are anything but spontaneous. Neither baptism nor circumcision is spontaneous. Prayer may be spontaneous in some contexts, but it surely does not have a greater value than institutionalized prayer. You confuse religion with *Sittlichkeit*, which is why presentist localism slips toward paganism.

Taves: When it comes to being baptized, the decision is as reflective and thoughtful as decisions can be in the context one's own history.

Berman: But it is not simply a choice. The child is not choosing to be

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baptized when the parents make a decision for the child. Some may make the decision quickly or "spontaneously," in your sense, while others may decide with more consciousness; some may make a negative decision, and others may spend a long time fretting. In most of these cases, however, they are participating in religious institutions which are hardly natural, organic, or spontaneous. They require a considerable amount of intention, effort, and sacrifice. But what holds for religious institutions also holds more generally for community institutions: it is an illusion to think that community in any form takes place naturally, as it were.

Piccone: If what you mean is that communities do not thrive naturally, in the same way flowers sprout in the Spring, but require considerable effort to keep them viable and dynamic, I could not agree more. All I was trying to emphasize is the extent to which the process is not exclusively a conscious, rationalist one involving mere conceptual transference but, since it also involves preconceptual dimensions of being — feeling, emoting, intuiting, etc.— it tends to become "second nature," at least in the sense that the past seems to extend into the future effortlessly, if only one were to adhere to established customs. But, of course, it must always involve critical mediation for, otherwise, it would be reification and that would mean the stagnation of traditions and therefore their doom.

Berman: My modest proposal is to consider whether nationhood is one of those categories of mediation. Would our lives be better if we were stripped of our national identities or would we be poorer? Would we be better off with only a local horizon? I think not.

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What is Italy's National Alliance?*

Alessandro Campi

If in 1988 a political scientist had to bet on the disintegration of the Soviet Union or on the return to power in Italy of the heirs of Mussolini's fascism, he would surely have opted for the former. While hardly predictable at the time, the collapse of communism was still considered possible — so much so that there was already considerable literature on the subject.[1] But it was unthinkable that the Italian Social Movement (MSI) could become a legitimate governing force.Yet the Italian elections of March 27-28, 1994 paved the way for precisely such a development: supporters of the MSI, under the new name of "National Alliance" [Alleanza Nazionale (AN)], entered the Italian government in positions of considerable responsibility as the "governing Right." Such an event, as well as the dismantling through the judiciary of the traditional party system, can be understood only within the framework of the profound upheavals following the collapse of communism and the end of the Cold War.

Some of the more conspicuous changes within Italian political culture must also be located within the same context: the abrupt de-ideologization of political struggle, the growing disaffection with democratic political contests, the gap between society and politicians and, most of all, the decline of anti-fascism as part of the collective *ethos*. The latter had been the Italian Republic's ideological cement from the very beginning. As Italy's "civil religion," anti-fascism has played an absolutely central role. It was the only outlook which could function as a cultural paradigm unifying

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1. See, for instance, Emmanuel Todd, *Il Crollo Finale. Saggio sulla Decomposizione della Sfera Sovietica* (Milan: Rusconi, 1978).

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a country profoundly torn apart and confused, as the legitimating ideology of the new constitutional pact.[2] Today it can no longer support Italian collective identity and sustain efforts to reconstruct the institutional order.

Anti-fascism, i.e., the appeal to the historical break represented by the civil war and the need to perpetuate the divisions of that era, has worked for the entire postwar period (especially between 1960 and 1990) as the most powerful ideological weapon for the delegitimation not only of the MSI, but also of the entire Right and, more generally, of whatever political groups could be identified as "anti-communist." At the same time, the Italian anomaly of a consociational regime at the moment of its implosion, has revealed the fragility and precaraiousness of the foundations of Italian democracy. One need only recall some salient moments of Italian postwar history, such as the Tromboni incident in 1960, when the Christian Democratic leader sought to include the MSI in a government coalition, which attempt unleashed so violent a reaction in the streets that it precipitated an abrupt reversal and the beginning of a new political season, conventionally defined as that of the "center-Left." The same goes for the 1970s and the phase of militant anti-fascism, which in the meantime had become the monopoly of the Left. This brought about the utmost ostracism of the MSI and the completion of the consociational framework of the Italian political party system. Against this background, in 1994, when the Silvio Berlusconi government included four ministers belonging to the ex-MSI, nothing happened: there were no demonstrations or other public protests. All that took place was widespread incredulity and shock. Only a few, among them those who had raged primarily against Berlusconi while hailing the MSI leader Gianfranco Fini as a loyal and unquestionably democratic adversary during the electoral campaign, ultimately sought to unleash the polemical weapon of anti-fascism. The so-called "Italian Revolution" could not have been carried out more smoothly. In a country of impeccable political professionals, what prevailed was a *parvenu* to politics such as Berlusconi, a Northern League guided by an eccentric leader such as Umberto Bossi, and the real or imagined heirs of fascism.

Actually, there had already been some indications of such a political outcome. Consider the administrative elections of November 1993. At that time, in the race for major districts in two key cities (Rome and Naples), Fini

2. Antonio Baldassarre, "La Costruzione del Paradigma Antifascista e la Costituzione Republicana," in *Problemi del Socialismo*, No. 71 (1986).

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and Mussolini's niece were the opposition to "progressive" candidates. Both were defeated, but by surprisingly small margins. In both cities the MSI had become the leading party, with more than 30% of the votes. In addition, there were 19 mayors elected in other cities, which joined the other 14 elected in the June elections of the same year in cities with a population over 15,000.[3] National Alliance's electoral victory was much more surprising than the rise of Berlusconi's Forza Italia and of the Northern League.[4] The phenomenon of a TV magnate compromising with the power structure of the First Republic to become the leader of a party that grew into Italy's leading political force in the short span of two months was certainly peculiar. On the whole, however, it seemed to fit a political context whose main features seem to be the personalization of electoral contests, populism and demagogy. An altogether more anomalous and inexplicable phenomenon is the fate of an allegedly "neo-fascist" party banished for almost 50 years to the margins of the Italian political system suddenly becoming part of government, i.e., democratically legitimated by a substantial popular vote.[5]

Three years after the electoral success of MSI-AN, the so-called epigones of neo-fascism have regained the status of full citizenship. During this time various scholars have sought to understand the nature of a political movement which, under the label National Alliance (a name formally sanctioned with the Fiuggi Congress of January 1995), today

3. The MSI's path to legitimacy and political respectability has taken place in stages. Credentials of the kind had already been provided by the socialist leader Bettino Craxi in the second half of the 1980s — even if in an effort to instrumentalize the MSI against the Christian Democrats. More important still is the impact of Francesco Cossiga's "pronouncements" during the last years of his presidential terms in delegitimating the entire political class in power (first and foremost the Christian Democrats) and in turning the MSI into a visible party operating within the prevailing political context.

4. Although dismissed and misunderstood by most political analysts, the Northern League had been growing, especially in Lombardy and Veneto, thanks to the support of vast social groups — white-collar, small and medium urban bourgeoisie, small industrial and artisan entrepreneurs — and had been able to articulate the interests of an autonomous and rooted political subculture. For a systematic analysis of this phenomenon in English, see the special issue on "The Leagues in Italy," *Telos* 90 (Winter 1991-92).

5. According to some observers, this simply confirms the unenviable peculiarities of Italian political culture. Bocca explains the rise of National Alliance in an even more radical manner as the resurfacing of an old disease: a mixture of populism, pro-anarchist illiberalism, the cult of power and of the authoritarian personality, and amoral familism — features which from Italian unification to the present have allegedly prevented the development of a "civil Italy" while supporting all "reactions" from Mussolini to Berlusconi to National Alliance. See Giorgio Bocca, *Il Filo Nero* (Milan: Mondadori, 1995). Such a reading comes close to Umberto Eco's a-historical interpretation of *Ur-fascism* as an "eternal fascism" allegedly "still with us, sometimes in civil clothing." See Umberto Eco: "Ur-Fascism," in *New York Review of Books*, Vol. XLII, No. 11 (June 22, 1995), pp. 12-15.

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presents itself as a finally legitimate Right, uninvolved with the fascist legacy and fully part of the democratic process. It is a political force which, in terms the results of the April 1995 administrative elections and more recent polls, enjoys the support of 12-13% of the electorate. While potentially ephemeral and contingent, this support cannot be undervalued by those seeking to understand the direction of Italian politics.

What kind of Right does National Alliance actually represent? In terms of official positions (Fini's speeches and interviews, the party press, congress proceedings, party statements), what are its ideological reference points and programmatic outlook? To what extent do they correspond to its concrete political actions? Is it credible that a party such as the MSI, associated with fascism and proudly "nostalgic" of Mussolini's regime, could change in a few months into a national-conservative political formation — a party of the "democratic Right" free of all authoritarian or, even worse, subversive and anti-democratic impulses? What is the relation of AN to other extreme Right European political formations, from Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front to the German *Republikaner*? Is Fini to be believed when he claims his political model to be Jacques Chirac and Gaullism, an unquestionably democratic Right? What accounts for the general "re-emergence" of the Right in Europe, within which the trajectory of AN must be located? Finally, what is the meaning of AN's alleged transition from "neo-fascism" to "post-fascism"?

Many misunderstandings concerning this new political subject derive from the superficiality with which the development of the MSI, and of the Italian Right in general, has been interpreted in post-war Italy: as neo-fascist, monarchic-clerical, traditional, conservative, liberal-national, radical, subversive, etc. For decades thispolitical formation, which in electoral terms has always oscillated between 5 and 6% (with a high point of 8.7% in 1972) has received practically no attention by political scientists and historians. Moreover, there has been no serious attempt to distinguish (in relation both to historical fascism and similar experiences in other European countries) among the multiplicity of its internal components.[6] What has prevailed is the logic of amalgamation and of the reduction of an entire political dimension to a few demonizing labels.

6. During its fifty-year history the MSI has been characterized by a "diaspora." For decades the party has shown considerable ability in attracting the young, something comparable only to the Italian Communist Party. Among the leading exponents of today's ruling class — journalists, academics, ministers, high-level bureaucrats, unionists, businessmen, party leaders — there are many who, in their youth, were members of the MSI or one of its collateral youth organizations.

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The first serious study of the MSI was published only in 1989 — over 40 years after its founding.[7] Up to then, with a few laudable exceptions,[8] there were only neo-fascist memoirs or militant anti-fascist accounts concerned primarily with denouncing the unquestionable anomaly of a party which, while fully part of the parliamentary framework, did not hide the that it identified with the fascist regime and, in particular, with that radical variant of Mussolini's fascism represented by the Republic of Salò. The main shortcoming of these accounts was their uncritical identification of Right and fascism. This is an ideological short-circuit which still tends to prejudice scholars. It is rooted in the ambiguous nature of the object under study, which has been permeated by a major contradiction.[9] It has to do with the fact that a force considered "subversive" and anti-system, proudly extraneous to the power structure of reborn Italian democracy, a direct expression of the socializing tendencies of the fascism of Salò, tendentially revolutionary, permeated by anti-bourgeois populism or even anti-capitalism — ideologically oriented toward fascism — in fact has *always* behaved according to the guidelines of a classic conservative and nationalist Right, perennially subaltern to the Christian Democratic Party and the moderate bloc that has ruled in postwar Italy.

Fascist in its ideological appeals and political symbolism, the MSI has always received most of its electoral support from the petty bourgeois South. This is a socially conservative Catholic and anti-communist group, most inclined toward clientism and nostalgic for Mussolini's regime (especially for its modernizing role and authoritarian and paternalistic face), but certainly not nostalgic for the civil war. To this electoral base must be added a substantial number of protest votes over the years. Thus a definitely *a-fascist* "social bloc" (except for a "hard core" minority — the "incorrigible" and the youth, more ideologized and radical, ready to appropriate the label of "historical losers") has always corresponded to a fascist ideological façade — proudly displayed to flaunt its diversity and to deemphasize the predicament of rejects to which "fascists within

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7. Piero Ignazi, *Il Polo Escluso. Profilo del Movimento Sociale Italiano* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1989).

8. See, for example, Giorgio Galli, *La Crisi Italiana e la Destra Internazionale* (Milan: Mondadorui, 1974).

9. This is how Chiarini summarizes the "true contradiction" on the anti-fascist Italian Right: "Its heart is with the socializing and heroic fascism of the Italian Social Republic, but its body lives on the energies conserved by clientistic and transformist fascism." See Roberto Chiarini, "La Destra Italiana. Il Paradosso di un'Identità Illegitima," in *Trasgressioni*, No. 17 (1993), pp. 95-118.

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democracy" had been reduced.[10] In other words, the political project apparently inspired by fascism's revolutionary and modernizing ambitions (in the double corporatist and socializing variant) has always corresponded more with a *Right of law and order* engaged in the defense of Christian values against the danger of communism than it has with the overthrowing of the geopolitical equilibrium resulting from WWII. All of this has taken place in the wake of a shift from a fascism lived as social and political revolution to a neo-fascism understood as a militant anti-communist force: a kind of anti-revolutionary dike.[11]

Despite all its programmatic oscillations, its political leadership's various ambitions, the conflicts between the "old" and the "young," and the contradictory political cultures that have coexisted within it, the MSI has always operated within that social space typical of all other European countries. It is the space of an ideologically moderate and anti-communist Right, socially based on mildly unhappy urban white-collar workers, disenchanted with official politics — a social space upon which has been superimposed the façade of an ideology directly inspired by fascism. During the early years, this has undoubtedly represented the MSI's *raison d'être* and its authentic matrix (the only one able to define a political space for the survivors of the fascist tragedy). Subsequently, it increasingly became an ideology exhibited primarily to establish identity: purely personal and political survival. It became a kind of protective armor — a symbolic resource thanks to which this party survived for decades within a ghetto logic imposed from outside but accepted internally. This does not mean that, precisely because of this condition of "exiles within their own country,"[12] the MSI has not had a key role in defining the parliamentary framework which for over 40 years has characterized Italian democracy: a paradoxically *cohesive* role benefiting the variegated anti-fascist front. Thus, through its very presence, the MSI has prevented the rise of a party which could have been a more politically credible and less ideo-

10. The MSI electorate, consistent with its own all but subversive petty bourgeois and "moderate" extraction, has always punished the party's Left turns. The most obvious instance is the experience of the Rauti regime (1990-1991), whose ambition to "open a breach on the Left" seeking to intercept the votes and the aspirations of the communist world undergoing an identity crisis, has coincided with the lowest electoral support for the party (with the exception of 1948, the year of its foundation): the meager 4% obtained in the administrative elections of 1990.

11. See Maurice Bardeche, ed., *I Fascismi Sconosciuti* (Rome: Ciarrapico, 1969).

12. Marco Tarchi, *Esuli in Patria* (Milan: Guanda, 1995).

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logically ambiguous interpreter of that social group.

In post-war Italy, the identification of "Right" (any Right) and fascism has played a double role: "With respect to the party system [it has meant] the constriction of all conservatism within the context of a rigid radical Right. For what regards specifically the internal life of any Right group [it has entailed] an irresistible reinforcing of a collective identity according to the ideological paradigms of historical fascism."[13] Here it is important to distinguish between the officially professed *ideology* of the MSI (fascist, subversive and anti-system) and the concrete political choices it has made throughout — *always in favor of conservative law and order policies:* adherence to NATO (1951), opposition to the center-Left (1963), opposition to the student movement (1970-1973), support for the "silent majority" (1971), support for divorce (1974), support for the death penalty (1980). This is necessary in order to break out of the erroneous identification of Right and fascism (which still conditions Italian political culture) and to acknowledge the need of dealing with neo-fascism as a particular reality with its own ideological, political and historical profile. It is also necessary to better comprehend the *ease* with which, with the disappearance of tensions connected with the Cold War, the MSI has been able to transform itself, in a way altogether consistent with its history and without any apparent trauma, into a party of the parliamentary Right. According to official documents, it now has an anti-progressive orientation, it is moderately nationalist, pragmatic and anti-ideological, and explicitly committed to a social Christian orientation (moderate economic liberalism, defense of the weak, criticism of finance capital, commitment to the principle of subsidiarity, support of social Catholic morality, etc.).

Those who see the "transformation" of the MSI into AN as a simple *maquillage*, since it has not entailed any struggles or fractures,[14] fail to draw the proper conclusions from the actual history of the MSI, i.e., the attempt (unsuccessful but continually reiterated) to insert itself into the Italian political system as part of the government within a broad anti-communist framework through alliances from time to time involving the

13. Chiarini, "La Destra Italiana," *op. cit.*, p. 99.

14. Actually, there was a fracture. After the Fiuggi Congress, Pino Rauti, the exponent of an anti-bourgeois traditionalism fashioned after Julius Evola, refused to be part of the new political formation and, along with another "incorrigible," the former MSI representative, Giorgio Pisanò, began a bitter struggle to safeguard the MSI and, along with it, fascism's heritage, against Fini's alleged capitulation to liberal-democracy, capitalism and bourgeois/telecratic neo-hedonism embodied, according to Rauti, in Berlusconi.

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Christian Democrats, the monarchists and the Liberal Party.[15]

Except for the very beginning (characterized by revolutionary and even terroristic impulses, the inevitable outcome of the convulsions following the end of the civil war[16]) and for an ambiguous relation with the so-called radical "Right" (which has negatively conditioned its history, primarily between the end of the 1960s and the early 1970s), on the whole the MSI has followed a *legal* strategy of cooperation at the level of sub-power, of constant tactical convergence with the forces of moderation in power: some sectors of the Christian Democratic Party and of the Vatican closer to clericalism and anti-communism, state apparatuses, the high ministerial bureaucracy, industrial environments and the intelligence gathering services of some foreign countries. Such a strategy was deployed already in 1954 by Arturo Michelini and subsequently pursued by Giorgio Almirante,[17]

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15. The critical reference here is to Ignazi, who has often insisted, but without drawing the proper conclusions, on this aspect by illustrating in detail the long, stubborn, and ultimately failed, "long march through the institutions" undertaken by MSI already in the 1950s. This march was interrupted, more out of necessity than choice, only in the decade that goes, roughly, from 1977 to 1987: the years following the split of the conservative and pro-Christian-Democrat component of Democrazia Nazionale (1976). These years were characterized by an unbearable political climate. Thus it was no longer a matter of a strategy of insertion into the system but of a perspective, tactically necessary for a completely ghettoized party, to present itself as the "alternative to the system." It was a time characterized by the re-entry into the party of the "hard" Riuti and by the slogan "struggle against the regime" — years of utmost political isolation for the MSI, interrupted only by the new political climate of the 1980s. If already in the 1950s the true ambition of the MSI leadership was to "enter into the institutional arrangement" as a political Right — beyond the ideological varnish and the principled declarations, inspired instead by fascism (it does not matter whether "Right" or "Left" fascism, or whether "regime fascism" or "movement fascism") — why deny that for AN, which is unquestionably the heir to the MSI, this shift could have been easy and altogether natural, therefore not at all traumatic? After all, Fini has accomplished what at least two generations of MSI leaders have only dreamed about: not a "new fascism", the "fascism of the year 2000" (which Fini himself still advocated in 1987, at the Sorrento Congress) but more modestly a "governing Right," maybe no longer subaltern to the Christian Democratic Party.

16. On clandestine neo-fascism and on insurrectional temptations, particularly strong during the early years after the war, see Piero Ignazi, *Il Polo Escluso*, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-23.

17. This is how Ignazi summarizes Almirante's politics around the 1970s: "Actually, the new MSI strategy seeks the same objective of the previous decades, i.e., to come out of the ghetto. To this end, the MSI picks up the residues of the monarchists and opens its doors even to those who did not belong to the fascist subculture, by offering a less nostalgic party than in the past, ready to play the role of a modern Right. There is also an attempt to undertake an ideological-cultural renewal . . . All this in order to minimize the connection with fascism and gain greater legitimacy in the electoral arena. In order to mark this shift, the party adds to its name "national Right." . . . Thus the party presents itself as the the embattled defender of the silent majority and, at the same time, as the respectable and renewed potential ally of the moderate coalition." Piero Ignazi, *L'Estrema Destra in Europa* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1994), p. 178.

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especially during the 1970s, first with the launching of the "broad anti-communist front" (1970), then through the so-called project of a "national Right" (1971), and eventually with the aggregation (1975) of an ephemeral but ambitious "Right Constituent."

The peculiar configuration of the Italian political system, characterized by a strong CD political center, however, prevented the attainment of this objective by seeing the presence of a neo-fascist extreme Right as simultaneously legitimating and delegitimating. It was *legitimating* in relation to its *own* role as the most trustworthy representative (because it was not subject to the ideological blackmail of anti-fascism) of the instances, interests and values of broad areas of Italian conservatism. It was *delegitimating* with respect to the governing ambitions of the political force located at the opposite side of the political line-up, i.e., the Italian Communist Party. In other words, for almost 50 years the Center has guaranteed its own "centrality" through two *conventiones ad excludendum*: anti-communism and anti-fascism. It is not an accident that in Italy the Right has recently been able to assert and legitimate itself only after the disintegration of the political center and, in particular, of the Christian Democratic Party.[18]

According to some, one of the results of the birth of NA, while precipitated more by events than consciously planned by the old MSI's leadership, is the elimination of the anomaly of the presence on the Italian *Right* of a delegitimated party officially excluded from alliances and government coalitions yet an integral part of them. From this viewpoint, notwithstanding all its ambiguities and contradictions, AN represents the end

18. "After 1992 and the eclipse of CD, the political Right emerged in Italy as an autonomous entity. It is clear that the two phenomena are strictly related and demonstrate — if it was ever necessary — that the ideal, topological and political location of the CD within the Italian system and customs was such as to internalize and represent, among the many "souls," even the one embodying the political Right . . . The true Italian Right was in the CD, and precisely because of this its strong role within the CD *magma*, in the complicated congerie of its men and its powers, of its currents and its "cultures," has never come out into the open as such, but has operated internally as a counterweight, in order to avoid that the CD, on the whole, went beyond a certain Left limit." See Biagio De Giovanni, "AN é la Nuova DC, Berlusconi la Destra: uno Stato Nascente," in *Liberal*, No. 1 (March 1995), pp. 102-103. Something similar can be found in Galli della Loggia who, in discussing the decline of the anti-fascist *conventio ad excludendum* and of the new spaces for maneuver opened for the political Right in Italy, explains: The electoral victory is the most evident and complete confirmation of this regained vitality of the Right in Italy. As expected, this happens at the expense of the center. In fact, March 27-28, 1994 represents a kind of April 18 in reverse: an avalanche of moderate votes which until then had moved from their *natural* course on the Right to the Center, now changed course." See Ernesto Galli della Loggia, *Intervista sulla Destra*, Lucio Caracciolo, ed. (Bari: Laterza, 1994), p. 164. Italics added.

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of a fifty-year equivocation.[19] It is an element of normalization of Italian political culture and of the party system,[20] where the MSI has long been the repository of certain existential pulsations and doctrinaire positions (e.g., those which, during the second half of the 1970s, were part of the so-called New Right) which can now find a more appropriate location and mode of expression, even as a party.

To realize how difficult it is to determine the nature of AN, one need only examine some recent evaluations. For most, it is still "an empty container" — a *nom de plume for* the old MSI, the fruit of Fini's[21] strategic ability and opportunism, concerning whose democratic evolution there are doubts and reservations. For others, especially in light of the Fiuggi Congress, AN can be considered a party of a post-fascist democratic Right. The leading advocate of the first thesis is Ignazi, who sees no substantial change in any of the three main elements defining a party: leadership, organizational structure and ideology.[22]

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19. Almirante candidly explained in 1956: "The ambiguity, dear comrades, is one and it is *to be fascists within democracy.*" Quoted by Gian Enrico Rusconi, *Resistenza e Postfascismo* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1995), p. 193.

20. Interpreted along trans-political lines (i.e., by taking into account the various political souls and the various political cultures historically present within the MSI) the AN has represented the victory of the cultural position prefigured by Gioacchino Volpe, Giuseppe Prezzolini and Augusto Del Noce (Risorgimento nationalim+anti-political conservatism+anti-fascist Catholic traditionalism critical of mass laicism) as distinct from contradictory yet long predominant positions within the MSI associated with Giovanni Gentile (corporatism, the ethical state) and Julius Evola (reactionary anti-modernism, the primacy of the warrior's ethics over that of the merchant, repudiation of bourgeois democracy).

21. There is no doubt that the MSI did little or nothing to encourage the political-institutional developments which, through Tangentopoli, led to the glamorous electoral results of March 27-28, 1994. Fini let himself be carried along by the current and, when all was said and done, found himself in a lucky spot. The charge of *opportunism* and *instrumentalism*, often made concerning the all-too-sudden birth of AN, does not make sense since Fini himself has often acknowledged the need to act promptly under the pressure of events, thus exploiting new favorable conditions. When a journalist pointed out that "The suspicion of opportunism remains: in the same way the PDS has redressed itself only after the collapse of the communist regimes, you invented AN only after having seen that a large number of votes was available. . .", Fini answered that it is "an unfounded suspicion. Opportunism always implies disparaging connotations. If anything it is a matter of understanding the opportunity of a given politics. Lucidity and courage . . . To do politics means also to be able to capitalize on opportune moments." See Pierluigi Menniti, "Fini: Vi Presento AN, Partito Democratico di Destra," in *IdeAzione* (January-February 1995), pp. 74-84. Elsewhere, he made the same point: "It is true that this turn was not prepared. Turns cannot be prepared, but they are made when there is the awareness that the moment has come to turn." See Vittorio Foa and Furio Colombo, *Il Sogno di una Destra Normale* (Roma: Reset, 1995), p. 39.

22. Piero Ignazi, "Alleanza Nazionale? É in MSI Riverniciato," in *IdeAzione*, Vol. II, No. 1, pp. 64-73.

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Actually, the leadership of the new party, both at the center and at the periphery, is still made up mostly of militants and functionaries of the MSI.[23] As for the actual representatives to parliament, with some exceptions they also turn out to be the political personnel of the old party; the few new additions have not been all that spectacular, coming mostly from the Christian-Democratic Right.[24] As for AN's new organizational formula, structured no longer on the basis of "universal" territorial sections but of mostly "professional" circles and clubs, it also seems copied from the MSI. Although the present phase is transitional, there is little doubt about the preeminence in hundreds of circles throughout Italy of long-standing activists and militants. In other words, the proposed coming closer to society has yet to happen: at best, it has only begun. Finally, as for the ideological aspect (the crucial element in judging the real nature of AN), Ignazi writes that the

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23. According to Ignazi, "The organizational core which concretely planned the project is composed entirely of cadres and leaders of the MSI . . . Thus AN was born within the MSI environment, promoted and sustained by the MSI with its structures, political personnel and finances, and named as its leader the MSI secretary . . . In its present state, AN is simply an electoral symbol . . . Even the new AN "circles" have been founded, in most cases, by MSI militants and are used to engage at that level, rather than in the party, new sympatizers." See Piero Ignazi, *Postfascisti?* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1994), pp. 8-9. In a nutshell, Ignazi claims that "The MSI has found itself in the very happy predicament of seeing itself credited with a transformation it never even dreamt of launching." See Ignazi, "Da Almirante a Fini: É Evitabile una Bad Godesberg?" in *Democrazia e Diritto*, No. 1 (1994), p. 117. Moreover: "it cannot be enough that the MSI lives the contradiction between a not critically elaborated, unconscious disposition to accept democracy and an ideology which are the negation of democracy. The contradiction must be resolved. But when things go well there is no incentive to change skin and alter one's identity, so it is improbable that this will take place. The half words, thrown out in some interviews, as Berlinguer used to do at the time of Eurocommunism, i.e., when the Italian Communist Party was very far from its transformation into a democratic party, cannot be enough." *Ibid.*, p. 118.

24. Among the outsiders who have joined AN are: Publo Fiori, already a leading exponent of the DC in Rome, a man closely tied to Giulio Andreotti; Gustavo Selva, once the editor of GR2 and a DC representative to the European parliament; General Ramponi, the ex-commander of the Finance Guards [*Guardia di Finanza*]; the economist Pietro Armani, once the vice-president of IRI for the Italian Republican Party. It is worth noting that at the time of the so-called "National Right" (1971), notwithstanding the climate of heated ideological clashes, there was an even greater and better qualified number of people who became engaged in the project. To mention only military people (for whom this political formation has always had a weakness, especially if retired) among those who joined at the time and became the new MSI-DN, was admiral Gino Birindelli, a notorious anti-fascist and ex-commander of the NATO naval forces in the Mediterranean. On this, see Ignazi, *Il Polo Escluso, op. cit.*, pp. 133- 165. As for AN, the only new member of unquestionable prestige is the political scientist Domenico Fisichella, who has always held conservative and anti-fascist positions, who was the first and most committed theoretical supporter of AN and, more generally, of the need to "transcend" the MSI.

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new political subject still lacks "the justification, the rationalization, the conscious acceptance of democracy."[25] Its cultural references are still those typical of this century's anti-democratic Right. The transition from *neo-fascism* to *post-fascism* has taken place only on the tactical level, without undergoing any serious ideological travail and without submitting its political culture to an authentic metamorphosis or some form of modernization to favor the shift of the new party from the political family of "the far Right" (within which Ignazi locates the "traditional" or "neo-fascist" and the "post-industrial" far Right) to the political family of the "democratic Right" (of a conservative or liberal type).

An equally negative evaluation of AN has also been provided by Marco Tarchi. In a recent book he writes that AN, while definitely breaking with "nostalgia," which was the MSI's most characteristic trait, cannot thereby be said to have developed an alternative political project. Accordingly, "Fini has never posed the problem of modernizing and reconfiguring the MSI patrimony. He has never attempted to critically re-evaluate that heritage in order to derive a political formula applicable to the present . . . The AN leader has limited himself to undertaking a march to power, putting aside the less digestible aspects of the MSI's original ideology in favor of a patchwork of heterogeneous elements held together by the glue of electoral success. It is a profoundly opportunistic operation . . . behind which there is no strategy: there are only the skills of the poker player who knows when to risk and when to bluff."[26]

Another critical evaluation worth mentioning because of its author's biography is Ernesto De Marzio's. A member of the MSI from the very beginning, in 1976 De Marzio was among the protagonists of the split resulting in the creation of National Democracy (ND), an ephemeral political formation which dissolved within three years and which today many consider a prefiguration of AN: the first serious effort to construct a democratic-constitutional Right no longer associated with nostalgia, the cult of memories and extremism. De Marzio does not take at face value Fini's turn, which he sees not as the result of a serious political renewal but of a variety of propitious political contingencies: Tangentopoli (in which the MSI was not involved), the polarization of the political clash precipitated by the new electoral system, Berlusconi's political engagement (which contributed to exploding all the previous equilibria between traditional political forces);

25. Ignazi, "Alleanza Nazionale? . . . " *op. cit.*, p. 67.

26. Marco Tarchi, *Cinquant'Anni di Nostalgia. La Destra Italiana dopo il Fascismo*, an interview with Antonio Carioti (Milan: Rizzoli, 1995), p. 221.

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and video-politics (which has allowed Fini to present himself, during the elections, as a leader with moderate and reassuring traits).

Naturally, there are also those who have seen the birth of AN in more positive terms. Most relevant in this respect is the leader of Italian historical anti-fascism, Vittorio Foa, who believes in Fini's repudiation of fascism and therefore in the possibility of the development of a moderate, responsible and normal Italian Right, in line with other European experiences.[27] The same can be said of the historian Giordano Bruno Guerri, who has welcomed the laicization of the Italian Right, now freed of those traits of secular religion and of spiritualism — expressed in the idea of a "mission," the cult of the fatherland and tradition — which according to him constituted fascism's most characteristic trait, its most negative heritage, and therefore the main obstacle in the development of a no longer nostalgic and authoritarian Right.

It is not easy to disentangle so many different evaluations, especially if one considers that the discussion concerning the real nature of AN, and more generally of the Center-Right coalition in which AN is a part, is subject to continuous superimposition of extraneous readings, e.g., accounts worried about the danger of a "new fascism" allegedly running through industrialized countries (of which the Italian experience would constitute a warning bell) or judging the appearance of AN and some of the forces associated with it as the nth variant of the so-called (and increasingly more incomprehensible) Italian case. In other words, it is a matter of choosing a comparative approach or a purely internal reading focusing only of the metamorphosis of *Italian ideology.*

In the first case, it is a matter of a plebeiscitarian "neo-authoritarian" "post-industrial fascism." Thus recent Italian developments are reduced to instances of the profound transformations undergone by mass industrial democracies following the crisis of the social-democratic-Keynesian model, the upsetting of the geopolitical framework brought about by the fall of communism and the ensuing diffusion of a growing fear, anxiety and uncertainty. In the second case, the focus is on the anomalies — structural, political and characterological — of a constitutionally eccentric country entering a new phase of a culture which, according to some, has always contraposed two Italies:[28] one civil, laic-progressive, European

27. See Foa and Colombo, *Il Sogno di una Destra Normale, op. cit.*

28. This is the *Italian ideology* outlined by Norberto Bobbio in his classic work, *Profilo Ideologico del Novecento* (Turin: Einaudi, 1991). From a different political perspective, it is the same account underlying the proposal of Marcello Veneziani in *La Rivoluzione Conservativa in Italia* (Milan: Sugarco, 1994).

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and liberal; the other anti-modern, Catholic, familial and populist. Probably the best way to explain some aspects of the "new Italian politics" is to consider it two levels. The country's presently confused political-institutional framework can be seen simultaneously as the result of the processes of change which in the last ten years have unfolded within Western democracies and of the peculiarity and specificity of what can be defined as "the Italian path to political modernization."

Within the comparative framework, it is possible to identify broad reasons which have favored the rise of what can be generally defined as right-wing political formations. These are expressions of a variety of heterogeneous views stretching from the federal populism of the Northern League to the liberalism of Forza Italia, ending up with the national-conservatism and the anti-ideological pragmatism presently expressed by the heirs of fascism. What, then, is AN? Here it may be useful to limit the analysis, utilizing official sources and materials — in particular the various positions taken by its leader Giancarlo Fini and the theses elaborated on the occasion of the Fiuggi Congress, starting with the one dealing with the relation of continuity and discontinuity of AN with respect to fascism: "The Right is not the child of fascism. The values of the Right predate fascism, have coexisted with it and have survived it. The Right's cultural roots are deeply grounded in Italian history: before, during and after the two decades of fascism."[29]

The image projected by AN is that of a party which wants to be seen as dynamic and modern, up-to-date and open to alliances (something altogether different, therefore, from a ghettoized defender of its identity and ideological purity, such as was the old MSI). It wants to be a party which, on the level of the representation of interests, attributes its own electoral success, and more generally that of the Center-Right coalition, to the constitution of a *new social bloc*, of an altogether unprecedented alliance between groups, values and interests hitherto divided and maybe even in conflict: an alliance of productive and unsubsidized groups (small and medium entrepreneurial bourgeoisie, artisan and businessmen, professoionals, the young and the unemployed no longer protected by the consociative model of the First Republic) which has defeated the alliance of *protected groups*: the parasitic bourgeoisie thriving, in "clientelism, bribes and corruption."[30] Furthermore, this new social alliance would have the

29. See the "Political Theses of the XVII National Congress of the MSI, 1994," in "Pensiamo l'Italia, il Domani c'é già. Valori, Idee e Progetti per Alleanza Nazionale," in *Secolo d'Italia* (December 7, 1994), p. 8.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

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merit of upsetting the political model based on the separation of *areas of representation* from those of *governability*, in terms of which only the political center could legitimately aspire to govern the country, on the basis of a double *conventio ad excludendum* with respect to both Right and Left, i.e., the MSI and the PCI (Italian Communist Party). This was a truncated model of democracy which left to the political forces of the Center total freedom of maneuver and which, at any rate, has not prevented the PCI from becoming *de facto* associated with the government through various consociative political formulae: from the "constitutional arc," to the "historical compromise," to "national solidarity."

As for the party's new profile, it seems to be that of a conservative Catholic party with nationalist tendencies, concerned with the defense of social tradition, opposed to the degeneration of collective morality brought about by secularization, and in favor of a "virtuous" dialectic between authority and freedom understood as essential pillars of the social order of democracy. Opposed to national chauvinism, AN poses the problem of how to "co-ordinate and catalyze the vital energies of a free, open, pluralistic and at the same time unified society,"[31] within the context of a common national belonging. Appealing explicitly to "the values of the Risorgimento and to Catholic thought,"[32] AN prefigures the reconstitution of the texture of the Italian nation, the indispensable premise for the instauration of an authentically participatory democracy in which "*there must not be enemies to eliminate but adversaries to defeat.*"[33] This entails full and unqualified adherence to the democratic method and the definitive rejection of all pretenses to provide an "alternative to the system." "The choice of the democratic system is . . . dictated . . . by the awareness that votes represent the only unchallenged answer to the problem of competition among political forces for gaining consensus."

AN's institutional model is *presidentialism*, already Almirante's choice and a theme concerning which present party leaders see one of the few elements of continuity with respect to the old MSI. What is preferred is a model of *direct democracy* able to result in new forms of popular sovereignty (from presidentialism to propositional referenda), new forms of participation through the empowering of mediating organisms between society and institutions (hence the proposal to con-

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

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stitute, on a territorial level, consultative assemblies composed of the representatives of social categories and of associationism).[34] The rejection of extreme nationalism and patriotism goes along with the rejection of political centralism — even with the relative acceptance of the federalist perspective.[35] The state is no longer the totalizing state, which Giovanni Gentile regarded as the nation's "ethical" heart, but rather a state "brought back to its essential core . . . as guarantor of justice and solidarity for everyone in the freedom of all."[36] It is a state enlivened by associationism, voluntarism, non-profit organizations and other autonomous organizations considered primarily as a useful "alternative channel, often antithetic to the anthrophy of the First Republic's mass parties."[37]

In order to summarize AN's ideological coordinates and social references, it may be accurate to describe the party as a formation attentive to the interests of the small and medium urban bourgeoisie (entrepreneurial or white collar), oriented, on the socio-economic level, to Christian social doctrine and a model that could be defined as "the social economy of the market." It is a party committed to a foreign policy of national prestige. But far from aggressive, it is one attentive to the communitarian and identitarian dimension of social life. Its main ambition is to present itself, with respect to a country mired in a deep crisis, as "a force of national recomposition."[38] It would be a formation able to unify a society in which, after the shock of Tangentopoli, there has been a growing need "to reassert national identity and the awareness of being part of a community rooted in history." According to Fini, it is a party of the "social Right" in favor a diffuse, pragmatic and anti-ideological capitalism still able to sustain a spiritual and anti-materialist vision of life; Europeanist, but within the framework of NATO — an organization which has not yet exhausted its political-military function.[39] As the editor of *Secolo d'Italia*, the official organ of AN, has put it, it is a party

34. This can be regarded as the "weak" heritage of the corporativist credo which has always characterized the MSI.

35. Recently, Gianfranco Fini declared himself in favor of the model of federal presidentialism advocated by the ex-theoretician of the Northern League, Gianfranco Miglio.

36. See the "Political Theses . . ." *op. cit.*, p. 16.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

39. "The enemy," writes Fini, "is no longer communism but Islamic radicalism." See Alessandro Caprettini, *La Nuova Destra. E Quindi Uscimmo a Riveder le Stelle . .* , (Palermo: Edizioni Arbor, 1995), p. 17. This work contains a long interview with Fini, "Fini: l'Italia che Vorrei . . .," pp. 231-255.

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which sees the sense of its political wager in the possibility of allowing the coexistence of market laws, state intervention and solidarity, and whose relation with fascism, having forfeited all authoritarian temptations, is now limited to these few elements: "a certain idea of the nation and of the people, the vindication of national identity, productivism as a factor of growth (even individual), and a sense of competence."[40]

Here the question arises: to what extent does this *static* image of AN correspond to its authentic nature? Is the break with neo-fascism and, in general, with anti-democratic culture, real, as party leaders claim and many voters seem to believe, or is AN, at least for now, still the expression, no matter how more modern and dynamic than in the past, "of the traditional far Right, i.e., the neo-fascist Right"?[41] Is the alarm and apprehension of those observers, even those who follow closely Italian politics and in particular the behavior of AN, totally unwarranted? Edward Luttwak, for example, has warned of the danger of a new fascism resulting from economic insecurity in Western industrial societies and from fears generated by the new dynamics of the international market.[42] Such pessimism, however, is unwarranted. The new party's electoral successes have little in common with those of Jean-Marie Le Pen, of Jörg Haider's Austrian liberals, or with the emergence of personalities such as Zhirinovsky in Russia. AN's political success has not been accompanied by any kind of political extremism or violence. If the far Right prospers primarily when political struggle becomes radicalized and ideologized, when there are dramatic social and economic emergencies, then AN has benefited from the exact opposite, i.e., a situation of growing political de-ideologization. If anything, AN has succeeded within a frightening ideological vacuum, something shared by all other parties. At any rate, there is no threat of any "return to Weimar."[43]

Another condition which usually explains the rise of the fascist or radical Right is the political system's legitimation crisis, i.e., the questioning of the democratic system as a whole. In Italy there is no trace of such a predicament. What Tangentopoli has precipitated into a crisis has been, not so much the *legitimacy* of the system, but the legitimacy of a political class and the *functionality* of hopelessly old institutions. AN

40. See Gennaro Malgieri, *La Destra Possibile* (Rome: Editoriale Pantheon, 1995), p. 17.
41. Ignazi, "Da Almirante a Fini. . . ," *op. cit.*, p. 118.
42. See Edward N. Luttwak, "Vi Spiego Perché cé il Fascismo nel Futuro," in *L'Espresso* (April 8, 1994), pp. 22-27.
43. See Gian Enrico Rusconi, "Sapore di Weimar," an interview with Chiara Valentini, in *L'Espresso* (April 7, 1995), pp. 106-112.

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does not identify "the causes of Tangentopoli with the rules of democracy,"[44] i.e., it has no doubts about the democratic system *as such*, only about some of its institutional degenerations. AN has not interpreted the Italian crisis according to a standard slogan of the far Right — as a crisis *of* democracy — but as the crisis of one of its particular instances, the Italian consociative-partitocratic type.

Finally, there is no trace in the AN of the xenophobia and racism which have contributed to the success of Le Pen in France and Haider in Austria. Of the three themes which during the past decade have appeared in the political agenda of European countries — the environment, security and immigration — the first accounts for the success of ecological parties; but the other two have become the battle cries of thefar Right. Radical parties such as the French National Front or the Austrian Liberal Party, which have no ties with fascism, have built their political platforms and electoral successes on "vigilance" against immigrants, the frustrations typical of metropolitan areas; they have often taken explicitly xenophobic positions or, worse, adopted racist themes which have had no relevance in AN's agenda.[45] This does not mean that, as Tarchi points out, if immigration were to become a serious social problem, AN could not in the future fall prey to illiberal suggestions and take on the role presently played in France by the Le Pen movement.[46]

This raises a point rarely dealt with by scholars and commentators: what will be AN's political future? According to some, it is a party destined to inherit the praxis and style of the old Christian Democrats (DC), thus increasingly inclined towards clientism, corporative mediation, deteriorating statism, with a predominantly Center-South rooting. According to others, it is a matter of recycling the long gone Socialist Party (PSI) of Craxi, animated by a strong modernizing objective and an excess of pragmatism. In fact, it is precisely an ostentatious pragmatism that seems to characterize the political behavior of AN and the political culture of many of its leaders. The need to break once and for all with its ideological past has led AN to present itself the first party to break with the 20th century, as a century of ideologies

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44. See the "Political Theses . . ." *op. cit.*, p. 12.

45. If in recent years there has been in Italy a *political entrepreneur of racism*, it has to be sought within the Northern League. While the Northern League is difficult to locate within the Right-Left axis, there is no doubt that some of its rank and file have articulated the of mixture of xenophobia and populism considered one of the characteristics of "the post-industrial far Right," but not of the new Italian Right constituted by AN.

46. Marco Tarchi, "Fuori dal 'Ghetto': Il Caso di Alleanza Nazionale," in Marcello Fedele and Robert Leonardi, eds., *Polity '95. Quale Cambiamento?* (Rome: Seam, 1995).

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and of related "totalitarian temptations,"[47] — precisely because it was born out of a highly ideologized formation such as the MSI.[48] By recycling a *topos* of liberal political science, AN often presents itself as the party of the *end of ideology*. As Chiarini has indicated, this modernizing thrust is interesting because it seems to transcend, at least in part, the classical equation "Right = conservatism" — the identification of the Right with the old, with the defense of the *status quo*, with a historical vision cast entirely in terms of anti-progressivism, to the benefit of an unprecedented (at least in Italy) conjunction between Right and modernity, of a future-oriented Right. Not by chance, this Right has already shown itself extremely able "in the market of post-materialist politics, all too at ease in the symbolic universe of modern mass communication"[49] — in other words, it is a Right perfectly able to adapt its own behavioral code to modernity.

47. What threatens the foundations of the AN project is not so much a hypothetical "duplicity" — a democratic body within which pulsates a fascist heart — but, rather, excessive pragmatism. The inability to express a historically closed judgement concerning its own past, along with an ostentatious anti-ideological prejudice (often coinciding with anti-intellectualism) threaten to bring about the fall of AN in pure praxism. In other words, they threaten to turn AN into a middle road between the worst DC (that of Southern clientism and of party "colonels") . . . and the worst PSI (the aggressive and rampant party of Craxi, concerned solely with the consensus of emerging social groups, anti-political cynicism and modernization). This danger was already perceived during the few months when AN was part of the Berlusconi government. Stenio Salinas, as exponent of the intellectual New Right, has described the risk of the new party as follows: "Within this context, which has been that of the success but also the final Christian-Democratic catastrophe, there are no political projects, life choices, ideological passions; there is only the attainment and the maintaining of power . . . Thus argumentative subtleties multiply . . . along with electoral machinations, the abtruse formulae with a otherwise unpresentable choices . . . And, spectacularly, one witnesses the entrance into society of those who, having reached the goal naked, think it is sufficient to find a set of custom-made shorts to cover past 'shames.' In this way, having neither ideas nor ideals, a skeptical, unconcerned politics develops — a kind of poor man's Machiavelli, whereby everything has a price, there is always a remedy, everything can be fixed and nothing, except one's own survival, is worth the cost of a choice. Unfortunately, the risk for AN today is ultimately precisely this: finally counting for something, but without having anything more to say." See Stenio Solinas, "Un Doroteo col Complesso della Sinistra," in *Il Giornale* (April 1, 1995), p. 5. In August 1995, the same Solinas, in an editorial in *Il Giornale*, reiterated the same point, launching a harsh polemic concerning the Christian-Democratic virus (which by that time had allegedly taken over AN), and the lack of an adequate cultural reserve able to sustain the modernizing project. Excessive personalization, however, prevented the debate from dealing with AN's real nature. The party exponents who joined the debate — from Mirko Tremaglia to Adolfo Urso, to Maurizio Gasparri — either ducked the challenges or limited themselves to generic considerations in a purely *politique d'abord* style, whenever they did not simply stoop to the level of name-calling.

48. See the "Political Theses . . ." *op. cit.*, p. 8.

49. Roberto Chiarini, *Destra Italiana* (Venice: Marsilio, 1995), p. 14.

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As already indicated, the risk of falling back into the vortex of illiberalism and of xenophobic pulsations is a possibility related to the importance that immigration will assume in the immediate future, and what it can entail in terms of a social clash and a radicalization of the political struggle. In this case, it is naturally necessary to consider the very high price, in terms of isolation and ghettoization, that, as already shown by the French experience of the National Front, any political force choosing anti-immigrant protest as its exclusive platform of struggle would be forced to pay. For a party such as AN, with a history of half a century of (self-)ghettoization, it would be an unpalatable perspective, maybe even unlikely to compensate for eventual electoral successes.

Ultimately, however, a different evolution cannot be ruled out — even in terms of the crisis which has led to the birth of AN — following some suggestions of Ernst Nolte[50] and Renzo De Felice's reflections concerning the "past that does not pass," both in Italy and in Germany.[51] Accordingly, this evolution would be in the direction of *a neo-nationalist right-wing democratic party* critically aware of its own history and posing at its center the problem of national identity. Along with other scholars, Nolte seems to assume as decisive, in the immediate future, the cleavage of immigration and the encounter/clash of civilizations, more as a cultural than a social reality: i.e., as the signal of a growing gap between social and ideological forces inclined toward *universalism* and those inclined toward *particularism* (where universalism and particularism must be assumed, writes Nolte, not in a militant sense such as to introduce destructive mechanisms or radical political conflicts, but in their "rational kernel," i.e., responding to irrepressible requirements of human nature). In the present historical context, the "rational kernel" of particularism is clearly connected with the idea of a national identity to contrapose to the overwhelming force of globalization, i.e., the tutelage of the historical continuity of a national community. For his part, De Felice has emphasized the need to reconstruct the ethical-political profile of the Italian nation through a conciliation with its own past, unmediated by convenient ideological reconstructions.

It is precisely within such a framework that the development of AN can obtain a rational historical justification and some sort of programmatic completeness. The need, felt both in Germany and in Italy, of a "nation finally aware of itself" can find in AN an effective political

50. See Ernst Nolte, *Resistenza e Postfascismo* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1995).

51. See Renzo De Felice, *Rosso e Nero*, an interview with Pasquale Chessa (Milan: Baldini & Castoldi, 1995).

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interpreter. In order to do so, it will have to move beyond the rhetoric of "national reconciliation" and "pacification," which remain inextricably tied to the realities of the civil war and, therefore, entirely stuck in the past. In other words, among all the parties presently on the political scene, AN seems the only one able to articulate, in a politically effective sense, a certain diffuse need for "national sentiments" within broad sectors of Italian society. This is particularly relevant now, half a century after the end of WWII, when the problem of national identity has resurfaced. (This is precisely the terrain upon which, after the war, the two dominant political cultures — the Catholic and the communist — have failed). As De Felice put it, AN could aspire to become the party of "the nation's patriotism," whose values are "expressed by history, culture and the events of a particular country and not a juridical abstraction"[52]— in opposition to those other political forces which today seem to recognize themselves in the "patriotism of the constitution." The present AN leadership may not be culturally and politically able to carry out this task. Yet AN's success in representing a real novelty in the Italian political panorama depends for the most part on whether it will be able to do so.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 104.

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Notes and Commentary:

Holocaust at Mount Carmel

John Bokina

"A cult is a religion with no political power."
— Tom Wolfe

Since the tragic events of February-April 1993, Waco, along with Ruby Ridge, has become a rallying cry for the militias and self-styled patriot groups of the American far Right. According to the far Right, Waco represents part of the US government's program for the systematic repression of patriotic communities.[1] It is difficult to measure the sincerity of their indignation, but the militias and patriots understand the events in Waco as a governmental assault on the First Amendment guarantee of freedom of religion. Even more importantly, rightists condemn the government's actions in Waco as an infringement on what they believe to be the Second Amendment right to bear arms.

I have no independent expertise about Waco. First, I lack the training to make my own judgment about the validity of Branch Davidian theology. As an appendix to their book, two religious studies scholars, include the completed introduction and first chapter of the book manuscript David Koresh, the leader of the Branch Davidians, was writing at the time of the April 19 fire. If one accepts the mystical world of the Book of Revelation's Seven Seals, I can only concur that Koresh's theology is "highly systematic, rigidly consistent, and internally 'logical'."[2] Second, I have no new sources about the course of events in 1993.

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1. Leonard C. Lewin's *Report from Iron Mountain on the Possibility and Desirability of Peace* (New York: Dial Press, 1967) is central to this conception of government as oppressor. *Iron Mountain* was read by the New Left, but Lewin has subsequently claimed that the book is a complete falsification and withdrawn it from publication. The far Right treats attacks on the credibility of *Iron Mountain*, including Lewin's disclaimer, as part of an elaborate Establishment cover up. For a publication history of *Iron Mountain*, see Robert Tomsho, "A Cause for Fear," *Wall Street Journal*, 9 May 1995, A1, A15.

2. James D. Tabor and Eugene V. Gallagher, *Why Waco? Cults and the Battle for Religious Freedom in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 5. Koresh's manuscript can be found on pp. 191-203.

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Indeed, during the stand-off I was curious but not alarmed. The networks reported daily events from Waco while I ate supper. I merely scanned newspaper stories about the fate of a weird group of people who did not seem to merit my concern. This was just another cult. Were they not involved in guns, child abuse, and drugs? Merely with the intent of measuring the credibility of Waco as a symbol within contemporary rightist political thought, I began reading some scholarly books on the subject.

To my surprise, the Owl of Minerva depicts an ominous situation. Two and a half years after the events, the scholarly accounts diverge widely from both the mass media and official government versions. This new research raises important issues. From this material, I learned that my inattentiveness and lack of concern about Waco were not personal idiosyncracies but deliberately cultivated political attitudes. Like most Americans, my view of Waco was carefully engineered by governmental manipulation of the media. Beyond the rightist preoccupation with religion and guns, the scholarly accounts are chilling reminders that the routine use of state violence and deception is not merely a matter of the bad old days, but also characterizes the seemingly more enlightened present.

The key to the widespread acceptance of governmental actions in Waco is the characterization of the Mount Carmel religious community as a "cult." The word conjures immediate and ominous associations with the Manson Family, Moonies, Scientology, and, particularly, Jim Jones. In order to discredit Branch Davidian religious ideas, the media presented the community's theology ahistorically. These ideas were severed from their deep roots within Seventh-Day Adventism in general and dissident Adventism in particular, including the community's presence for four generations on the outskirts of Waco. In addition, the media portrayal of the Branch Davidians replicated the views of mainstream Christian anticult organizations like the Council on Mind Abuse (COMA) and the Cult Awareness Network (CAN). Media coverage emphasized the four essential elements of anticult ideology: "the focus on the all-powerful leader, the representation of the followers as automatons completely under the leader's control, the intimations of abuse and violence, and the clinching comparison to Jonestown."[3] In its depiction of cult followers as automatons, the anticult ideology represents an extreme example of the postmodern notion of the death of the subject.

For self-serving reasons, the cause of the Branch Davidians has been taken up by the far right. But the power of the cult label is demonstrated by the indifference of people who consider themselves political progressives. Liberals and the Left have championed the causes of racial, ethnic, gender, and sexual minorities, but

3. *Ibid.*, 85. See also Dick J. Reavis, *The Ashes of Waco: An Investigation* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), pp. 12-15, and Stuart A. Wright, ed., *Armageddon in Waco: Critical Perspectives on the Branch Davidian Conflict* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 75-110. Wright's book consists of sixteen essays by scholars in sociology, religious studies, history, and law.

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this same concern has not been extended to non-traditional religious minorities.

Explaining this indifference must remain a matter of speculation. Two sociologists suggest a structural-functional explanation for accepting persecution of non-traditional religions. The protection of racial, ethnic, gender, and sexual minorities from the most overt forms of persecution "leaves few groups of any significant size to persecute."[4] According to this account, even political progressives have an unconscious tendency to tolerate persecution of a marginalized minority. I would like to offer a more conscious and intellectual explanation. As heirs to the Enlightenment, liberals and leftists are inured to the fate of pre-Enlightenment religious groups like the Branch Davidians. Marx wrote that religion was an opiate; Freud that it was an illusion. With this background, I initially found it hard to sympathize with a group of people who abandon society in favor of a life of material deprivation and twelve- and sixteen-hour Bible study sessions in the dusty plains of central Texas. In the middle ages, the Branch Davidians may have been considered saints and martyrs. Late in the 20th century, they are a cult of psychopaths whose lives have little value.

"It would have been better if you just called
me up and talked to me."
— David Koresh

On the morning of February 28, 1993, between seventy-five and ninety armed Special Agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms raided the Mount Carmel community. The BATF was supported by the Texas National Guard, the Texas Department of Public Safety, and the US Army. According to investigative reporter Dick J. Reavis, raiders on the ground were supported in the air by three helicopters that strafed the compound with automatic weapons.[5] Authorized by BATF Director Stephen Higgins, the raid's purpose was to arrest Koresh for violating gun laws. A shoot out ensued. Casualties were heavy on both sides, including the deaths of four BATF raiders and six Branch Davidians. The BATF failed to arrest Koresh.

Although the Branch Davidians were much less political and militant than rightist religious groups in Idaho,[6] they were armed. Some of the weapons in the

4. Christopher G. Ellison and John P. Bartkowski, "'Babies Were Being Beaten': Exploring Child Abuse Allegations at Ranch Apocalypse," in Wright, *Armageddon in Waco*, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

5. Reavis, *The Ashes of Waco*, *op. cit.*, pp.93-101. Other scholars are more cautious about the involvement of helicopters in the raid. Tabor and Gallagher relegate the reports of helicopter fire to a footnote. See *Why Waco?*, *op. cit.*, pp. 213n4.

6. See the two fine studies by James A. Aho: *The Politics of Righteousness: Idaho Christian Patriots* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990), and *This Thing of Darkness: A Sociology of the Enemy* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994).

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compound were set aside for possible use in self-defense. But by far most of the weapons were in their original shipping boxes and were intended for resale.[7] Along with a Branch Davidian auto repair shop in Waco, the wages of employed Mount Carmel residents, and the donations of supporters, commerce in guns was a major source of the income sustaining the community.

The negative overtones of a cult helped to justify the issuance of a warrant for Koresh's arrest. The legal issue was rather trivial. Koresh was to be arrested for failing to register and pay taxes on a few automatic weapons. In order to bolster the case for Koresh's arrest, the BATF "Probable Cause Affidavit" used to secure a warrant mentions the word "cult" seventeen times.[8] Although these matters lay far beyond the jurisdiction of BATF, the Affidavit also makes reference to possible child abuse and unusual sexual practices at the compound.

In Washington, BATF exhibits all the characteristic self-preserving and self-enhancing traits of government agencies. But in the field, the Rambocrats of BATF have adopted violent tactics as normal operating procedures. In their Washington attire, representatives of BATF display typical bureaucratic self-interest. In the bureaucratic struggle for survival, BATF has long-standing liabilities. It is a holdover from the Prohibition era, although ironically the Brady Bill gives the agency a renewed lease on life. As an agency whose functions overlap with those of several others, BATF constantly struggles to display the necessity of its continued existence. These chronic conditions were exacerbated in the early months of 1993. In January, *60 Minutes* ran a piece on the sexual harassment of female Special Agents.[9] Early in March, the BATF budget was up for review in Congress. With a combination of arrogance and media savvy, BATF invited reporters to accompany Operation Showtime, the agency's telling code name for the raid on Mount Carmel. BATF executives hoped that a dramatic success would strengthen a vulnerable agency. Instead, due to the famous incident when a lost reporter tipped off the raid by asking a Branch Davidian postman for directions to Mount Carmel, the media witnessed the worst debacle in BATF's history.

Out in the field, in their black jackets, BATF presented a very different image. Armed assault, euphemistically termed "dynamic entry," was the norm, not the exception. In the three years prior to Waco, BATF conducted 578 SWAT-style armed raids,[10] i.e., almost one dynamic entry every two days. Despite the fact that Koresh was a familiar figure in and around Waco, despite the fact that he regularly jogged beyond the borders of the Mount Carmel compound, despite the fact that he had a number of peaceful interactions with local police and other

7. Reavis, *The Ashes of Waco*, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-38, and Tabor and Gallagher, *Why Waco?*, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-65.
8. Tabor and Gallagher, *Why Waco? op. cit.*, pp. 100-101.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 103.
10. Reavis, *The Ashes of Waco*, *op. cit.*, pp. 183.

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State agencies, BATF did not seriously consider a nonviolent arrest of Koresh. In a domestic application of Colin Powell's Gulf War strategy, the dynamic entry into Mount Carmel was to be effected by "excessive force."[11] In a March 1 press conference, one Special Agent bemoaned the fact that BATF did not have artillery for the February 28 raid.[12]

> "You know, all they're doing is getting the public ready to come in and, and, and do away with us."
> — Juliette Martinez, a Branch Davidian

On March 1, 1993, the day after the unsuccessful BATF raid, the situation in Waco was redefined. Although the identity of the hostages was never clear, the ensuing stand off was characterized as a hostage situation. Hence, the FBI took command of the various government forces in Waco. For fifty-one days, the FBI supervised the siege of the Branch Davidian compound. Informing President Clinton about her decision, Attorney General Janet Reno authorized the action that would bring the siege to an end. On April 19, tanks and armored vehicles punctured the walls of the Mount Carmel buildings and inserted tear gas canisters. Shortly thereafter, the buildings burst into flames. Seventy-six residents were killed by the fire or by Branch Davidian gun shots.

The transfer of the Waco stand off from the BATF to the FBI entailed a radical change in tactics. Using an analogy from the Nazi era, the situation was transferred from the thuggish hands of the SA-like BATF[13] to the lethal efficiency of the SS-like FBI. February 28 was Waco's *Kristallnacht*. April 19 brought the final solution of the Branch Davidian question.

In the hours between the unsuccessful BATF raid and the FBI assumption of command, a wounded Koresh was able to establish contact with the outside world. He was interviewed live on CNN and on a local radio station. But with the FBI's arrival, access to the Branch Davidian perspective on events was eliminated. The community was isolated. The FBI cut off Koresh's outside phone lines. Koresh and his associates could only communicate with the FBI by phone. The FBI then restricted press coverage. Reporters were kept three miles away from the compound. Reporters who snuck closer were roughed up and arrested.[14]

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11. Stuart A. Wright, "Construction and Escalation of a Cult Threat: Dissecting Moral Panic and Official Reaction to the Branch Davidians," in Wright, *Armageddon in Waco*, *op. cit.*, p. 77.
12. Reavis, *The Ashes of Waco*, *op. cit.*, p. 178.
13. Even *Soldier of Fortune* magazine, that paragon of civilized pacifism, characterizes BATF as the "knuckle-dragging pariah of pistol-packing feds." Quoted in Tabor and Gallagher, *Why Waco? op. cit.*, p. 131.
14. James T. Richardson, "Manufacturing Consent about Waco: A Structural Analysis of the Role of Media in the Waco Tragedy," in Wright, *Armageddon in Waco*, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

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Isolation was followed by demonization. The FBI spread the rumor about Branch Davidian drug use, even though they knew that drugs were forbidden in Mount Carmel. Several years before, Koresh turned in a pair of Branch Davidian drug users to the police. They also spread the rumor about child abuse, even though they knew this to be false. On a number of occasions, the Texas Department of Human Services investigated the community and found no evidence of child abuse. Indeed, subsequent psychological examinations of surviving Branch Davidian children have revealed no signs of mistreatment.[15]

From a legal standpoint, there were issues that could have been raised about children and conjugal relations at Mount Carmel. For Koresh and the Branch Davidians, the laws of the state were the laws of a corrupt "Babylon." Mount Carmel, on the other hand, acceded to the higher law of the Bible. Like some other Biblical ultra-fundamentalists, Koresh was a polygamist. He had one "legal" wife and six other "spiritual" wives. Moreover, some of his wives, both legal and spiritual, were below the legal — but not the Biblical — age of consent. Still, polygamy and statutory rape are not grounds for BATF dynamic entries or FBI-directed tank assaults. The current issue of *National Geographic*, for example, discusses the "tens of thousands" of Utahans who openly practice polygamy, including the photo of a polygamist calmly posed among four of his five wives.[16]

In order for the demonization to succeed, all evidence of Branch Davidian humanity had to be suppressed. After the cut off of their outside telephone lines, Koresh and the Branch Davidians spent many hours talking to various FBI negotiators. Only a small fraction of these conversations were relayed to the press. Denied access to this material through his Freedom of Information Act requests, Reavis finally obtained the 18,000 pages of telephone transcripts via a leak. The transcripts reveal a community that was very serious about its religious beliefs and very rational about its current plight.

In addition, the Branch Davidians made some videos they hoped would be released to the media. These videos contained the images and words of Koresh, some of his wives and children, as well as other Branch Davidians. Because the Justice Department was concerned that "if the tape was released to the media, Koresh would gain sympathy,"[17] the videos were suppressed. One of the strengths of Tabor and Gallagher's book is the inclusion of stills from the videos and other photos of Branch Davidians. Instead of a demonic cult leader and his automatous followers, the pictures reveal some ordinary — and rather happy — human beings. These pictures may not prove anything, but they do humanize the Waco situation by providing visual images of Branch Davidians other than Koresh.

The FBI then lied to the Branch Davidians. In an effort to get the children

15. Reavis, *The Ashes of Waco*, *op. cit.*, p. 229.

16. See Donovan Webster, "Utah: Land of Promise, Kingdom of Stone," in *National Geographic* 189 (January 1996), especially pp. 61 and 68.

17. Quoted in Reavis, *The Ashes of Waco*, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

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out of the compound, the FBI promised Koresh they would be sent to designated relatives. Instead, the Department of Human Services went to court and obtained an order that severed the Branch Davidians' parental rights as well as the possible custody rights of their relatives. The FBI then lied to Attorney General Reno and the American public. In an April 14 letter, Koresh announced his reception of the long-awaited message from God that would allow him and the other Branch Davidians to leave Mount Carmel. According to the message, Koresh was to write out his interpretation of the Seven Seals, then the community could emerge from the compound. Since this promise of a peaceful resolution to the situation conflicted with on-going FBI plans for an assault, the letter was discredited. The Seven Seals manuscript, like all of Koresh's theology, was dismissed as more "Bible-babble." Indeed, the FBI denied that Koresh was even working on a manuscript, characterizing it as just another delaying tactic employed by the demonic cult con man. Despite these FBI denials, on April 19 Branch Davidian Ruth Riddle emerged from the gas-infested compound with a computer disk containing the beginning of Koresh's book on the Seven Seals.[18]

If the FBI was the master of disinformation about Waco, it also showed itself to be as prone to violence as the BATF. In order to save the children on the compound, the FBI leadership convinced Attorney General Reno of the necessity for the April 19 tear gas attack. In itself, a tear gas attack sounds rather innocuous — until one learns about the gas that was used. CS gas is banned for use in international warfare. More than one hundred nations have signed this agreement, including the US. Among its lethal properties, CS gas is combustible when used indoors. The FBI knew this, yet no preparations were made to put out a fire.[19] The buildings in the compound, including the bullet hole evidence from the February 28 helicopter attack, were completely destroyed. Twenty-one children under the age of fourteen were among Branch Davidians who died on April 19.[20] In a variant on village "pacification" during the war in Viet Nam, the FBI "saved" twenty-one children from the depredations of Koresh by killing them. A few weeks later, the charred remains of Mount Carmel were bulldozed "for health reasons."[21]

"Some religious fanatics murdered themselves."
—President Bill Clinton

Isolation, demonization, deceit, gas, and incineration: we seem to have

18. Tabor and Gallagher, *Why Waco? op. cit.*, pp. 15-21.
19. See Reavis, *The Ashes of Waco, op. cit.*, pp. 267-77.
20. Tabor and Gallagher, *Why Waco? op. cit.*, p. 3.
21. Dean M. Kelley, "The Implosion of Mt. Carmel and Its Aftermath: Is It All Over Yet?" in Wright, *Armageddon in Waco, op. cit.*, p. 359.

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experienced this pattern on a grander scale not so long ago. In the Nuremberg trials this pattern was called a crime against humanity. So far, the BATF and FBI have escaped this opprobrium. The Treasury Department report on Waco was critical of BATF. But the initial BATF raid was treated as a mistake, not a crime. BATF Director Stephen Higgins was forced to resign. Initially, a few BATF Special Agents at the scene were fired, but they have since been rehired with back pay. The FBI, perpetrator of the final solution of the Waco stand off, has escaped criticism. The Justice Department report on Waco was laudatory. Indeed, as a cover up of BATF crimes, the FBI's tactics in Waco were a resounding, if deadly, success.

If these agency self-examinations barely touched the crucial issues, a second, and potentially more penetrating, official investigation of Waco took place during House and Senate committee hearings in the summer of 1995. Unfortunately, the hearings were held in relative obscurity. The media was distracted by the more pressing matter of the O.J. trial. In any case, the hearings were another missed opportunity, their effectiveness blunted by the Republicans' blatantly partisan attempt to use Waco as a means to embarrass the Clinton administration. Still, the hearings may have had a salutary effect, as they "halted," at least temporarily, "the attempt to convert the FBI into a full-fledged American Gestapo."[22]

The surviving Branch Davidians have not fared so well. The government's war against them did not end with the tear gas attack of April 19. The eleven adult Branch Davidians who left the compound before or during the tear gas attack were put on trial in San Antonio. For the Justice Department, the survivors' conviction would be the ultimate vindication of the government's actions in Waco. The survivors were charged with four crimes: conspiracy to murder federal officials, aiding and abetting the murder of federal officials, murder of federal officials, and gun law violations. If convicted on all charges, each survivor would be sentenced to forty years in prison.

The government's case was plagued by a fundamental contradiction. According to the anticult ideology that had been applied to the Branch Davidians, the survivors were not responsible beings. Rather, they were the automatons of the demonic cult leader. But now, in federal court, the survivors were held responsible for the BATF deaths on February 28.[23] Whatever the reason, the jury was not convinced by the government's case. In their initial vote, the jurors split nine to three in favor of acquittal on all charges. As a compromise with the three jurors who considered the survivors to be guilty, the majority agreed to find the defendants guilty of a lesser charge: aiding and abetting the voluntary manslaughter of federal officials. Conviction on this charge would lead to a sentence of approximately six years in prison for each survivor.

Because the jury did not follow his instructions, the judge in the Branch Davidians' case, Federal District Court Judge Walter Smith, Jr., was able to set

22. Samuel Francis, "Principalities & Powers," *Chronicles* (February 1996), p. 38.
23. Tabor and Gallagher, *Why Waco? op. cit.*, p. 113.

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aside the jury's intent.[24] Three defendants were released, and the eight others were each sentenced to an average of thirty years in prison.

"If a billy club is excessive force, what is a tank?"
Paul Roberts, journalist

Despite my increasing fascination with Waco, my mind wandered as I read the books about the tragedy. I read about Koresh, the Branch Davidians, the BATF, and the FBI, but I recalled earlier events. I thought about the different responses to Waco and to Rodney King. The public was duly outraged by the taped beating of King, but so acquiescent in the deaths of eighty Branch Davidians. And long before Rodney King, I recalled my own primitive, but in some sense primordial, political experiences. Before I knew that the state protected particular economic interests: before I understood that politics and economics were part of an internally contradictory cultural totality, I experienced and despised the violence and deceit of the American state.

I grew up in the Chicago of Mayor Daley the Elder. In the early sixties, I spent my early teens hanging around the local parish schoolyard. Along with my friends, I played basketball, softball, and touch football. We also spent a lot of time smoking cigarettes, drinking Pepsis, and generally acting cool. The schoolyard was open to the street on two sides. One day four squad cars pulled up, two on each of the streets adjoining the schoolyard. Two or three cops emerged from each and started walking towards us. Since, by chance, we were not doing anything wrong at that particular moment, we stood our ground. They did not utter a word. But when they reached us, they started flailing away with their billy clubs.

Over the next couple of years, I saw the squad cars pull up two more times. On these occasions, we scattered in all directions, and only a few of us were beaten. We were white kids: Poles, Italians, Irish. These were white cops: Poles, Italians, Irish. If they were doing this to us, what the heck were they doing to the kids in other neighborhoods, the kids who the cops *really* did not like? A few years later, in August 1968, protesters gathered to object to the much grander and more lethal violence and deceit perpetrated by another leader of the Democratic Party: Lyndon Johnson's war in Viet Nam. This time the whole world was able to watch the much-practiced sweep-and-club tactics of Chicago's finest. The new scholarly literature on Waco has reawakened my outrage at the officially sanctioned violence and deception practiced by the American state.

Framed within an uncontested anticult ideology, the holocaust in Waco has only deepened the public's negative attitude toward non-traditional religions. Within the monolithic label of cult, the Branch Davidians now take a place in the anticultists' continuous history of violent and self-destructive non-traditional

24. Reavis, *The Ashes of Waco*, *op. cit.*, p. 296-99.

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religions. Because the Branch Davidians were armed, they are lumped together in news stories with the Aum Shinri Kyo sect in Japan and the latter's subway gas attack. Because the government alleges that the Branch Davidians started the April 19 fire, they are seen as the successors of Jonestown and as the predecessors of the suicidal Order of the Solar Temple in Europe and Canada. Finally, the memory of the Branch Davidians is blackened by their ostensible friends. Political progressives are suspicious of the Branch Davidians because of their posthumous adoption by the rightist militias and patriot groups. Most of all, the Waco tragedy of April 19, 1993 is obscured by the Oklahoma City tragedy of April 19, 1995. With unsought friends like Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols, the Branch Davidians certainly need no enemies.

The problem of media manipulation at Waco is transformed by the Christian right into part of a massive government-media conspiracy to brainwash Americans with a pernicious secular humanism.[25] Concern about FBI violence at Waco and Ruby Ridge fuels militia fantasies about a systematic government plan to persecute rightist communities. Protests against the inquisitorial and confiscatory practices of the IRS provide a populist cover for conservative attacks on the tax code. But freed from rightist distortion, public discontents about Waco, Ruby Ridge, the IRS, and abusive bureaucracies represent authentic moments of populist protest, and precious opportunities to reconnect Left theory to a popular base.

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25. Michael Lind, "Rev. Robertson's International Conspiracy Theory," *New York Review of Books* 42 (February 2, 1995), *op. cit.*, pp. 21-25.

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Response to Joseph Bendersky

Paul Gottfried

Joseph Bendersky's brief against 20th century American xenophobia sounds peculiar.[1] It is hard to believe that it deals with the recent past of a country in which quotas and other special benefits are routinely awarded to designated minorities, in which anthropology and sociology departments adamantly insist that genders and races are mere social constructs, and where the media constantly warns against deviations from angelic standards of tolerance. In Bendersky's America, the US army was full of Nazi sympathizers but ended up annihilating Nazi Germany. Its government abounded in anti-Semitic bigots, yet waged a relentless war against suspected German sympathizers in the US. Indeed, the US was far more zealous in fighting Nazism and rescuing its victims than it was in opposing the Communists, despite their equally gruesome atrocities. How could this have been the case in a military dominated by Nazi-sympathizers?

Bendersky's evidence of pervasive bigotry in the US is either inaccurate or exaggerated. Any discussion of the genetic basis of intelligence is conveniently related to the cult of the blond beast. Administering the Binet test for intellectual aptitude or recognizing cognitive disparities is, for Bendersky, proof positive of racism, anti-Semitism, and other undesirable attitudes. Never does it occur to him that I.Q. tests have predictive value in judging the performance capabilities of the testee. The military and civil service have used them, for the most part, not to put down intended victims but to know what to do with personnel. Though the government may not always have used such testing effectively, this was due not to hardened hatreds but to a lack of knowledge about the use and limits of testing instruments.

The US government's failure to suspend the 1924 Naturalization Act in favor of Nazi refugees is also thought to demonstrate the magnitude of American anti-Semitism. In point of fact, Jewish as well as Christian public figures were responsible for ignoring this problem; nor was it widely known in 1940 that Nazi refugees were returning to a life-threatening situation in Europe. My own family came to the US as refugees in the late 1930s, thanks to a gracious American gentile, who found a convenient technicality to let us in. But neither he nor my family believed they would have been killed by staying in Austria.

In Bendersky's account of the 1924 Naturalization Act, it is hard to tell fact

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1. See Joseph Bendersky, The Disappearance of Blonds: Immigration, Race and the Reemergence of 'Thinking White'," in *Telos* 104 (Summer 1995), pp. 135-158.

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from fiction. He describes an attempted cooling-down period in the 1920s after an unprecedented rate of American immigration from the 1880s on. Evidently, he does not believe that democracies should be allowed to lower their level of immigration or to make cultural judgments about which immigrants will be the most compatible. Any attempt to do either is treated as a hate crime. Unlike Wayne Lutton, who is writing a book on this subject,[2] Bendersky fails to grasp that organized labor and working class discontent were key factors in the passage of the 1924 Naturalization Act. Big business then as now favored the influx of cheap foreign labor. In 1924 congressmen talked openly about the dangers of Bolshevism being increased by the discontent of American workers and by the influx of foreign revolutionaries. The American Federation of Labor openly appealed to these fears in trying to stabilize the working and financial conditions of their members. Outspoken supporters of the Act, blacks were particularly upset by the necessity of competing with foreign laborers for unskilled jobs and fell quickly into line with the AFL's position. It is quite possible that some congressmen heard of Lathrop Stoddard, Charles Woodruff, or Madison Grant and may even have read one of their tracts. But that was neither a sufficient nor much of a contributing factor to the Naturalization Act passed in 1924.

In his eagerness to see racialism and anti-Semitism everywhere, Bendersky both exaggerates the influence of Stoddard, Grant and other cultural pessimists affected by racial theories and disregards the far greater impact exercised by environmentalists and pragmatists on interwar America. Franz Boas, John Dewey, Ashley Montagu, and dozens of Progressive social scientists had larger readerships and more political influence than America's isolated equivalents of Count Gobineau. Carl Degler has described the impact of Boasian and Deweyite social theories for the period Bendersky treats.[3] While Degler holds to the same Left liberal values embraced by Bendersky, he does highlight the victory, much of it politically conditioned, of the environmentalist and behaviorist views of human nature. Such views, Degler shows, were more useful to the welfare state than genetic determinism or other behavioral theories Bendersky sees as reflecting Nordic fixations. The views that human nature is malleable and that all citizens can and should be trained in global democratic thinking were also amply evident in the writings and speeches of US Commissioners of Education.[4] Frank War Studebaker, US Commissioner of Education under FDR, stressed the Deweyite

2. Wayne Lutton, The Naturalization Act of 1924 (Detoskey, MI: Social Contract Press, 1996).

3. Carl Degler, *In Search of Human Nature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 61-78.

4. Stephen Sniegoski, a historian of American education, is currently completing a book on the plan for social engineering through public education during the interwar period. A more accessible study of the same subject is Christopher Lasch, *The True and only Heaven* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1991), pp. 445-464.

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belief that all American youth could be trained in the same liberal egalitarian faith. The denial of significant racial differences was also a common practice of Deweyites and Boasians. Indeed, the view of biological differences as imaginary or at least removable obstacles to Progress was basic to the social plans that American intellectuals constructed in the 1920s and 1930s. Despite his other failings, Dinesh D'Souza has demonstrated this point exhaustively.[5]

Clearly, Bendersky is unhappy because his own particular agenda was not adopted soon enough. In the 1930s and 1940s people still expressed politically incorrect sentiments: white Protestants could be indiscreet without being censored. Now other groups are free to vent their hate — women against men, Jews against Christians, blacks against whites — in a way that once would have seemed shocking. The amount of racial hatred now being vented would certainly appall Bendersky if whites were the ones who expressed it. From his perspective, it is not even proper for white Americans to notice their race favorably.

The uncritical references to Leonard Dinnerstein's remarks about American anti-Semitism[6] are particularly disturbing. As someone whose family did live under an anti-Semitic regime, it is clear to me that there are crucial differences between the object of Dinnerstein's complaints and a truly anti-Semitic government. The latter can be recognized not because it allows people to snub Jews (who are no slouches in this department and have snubbed every other group socially and genetically) or because it permits its citizens to express anti-Jewish opinions or set up academic quotas for non-WASPS. An anti-Semitic government takes measures to exclude Jews as a special case from civic and political activities permitted to other citizens. Much of what Dinnerstein calls anti-Semitism are functions of other circumstances, e.g., having state churches in early America that excluded non-members from particular civil rights, social dislike for Eastern European Jews as opposed to earlier Jewish immigrants, holding political views that Dinnerstein as a left-liberal disapproves of, and suffering exclusion from social privileges together with others who are not upper-class WASPS.

All these distinctions between real anti-Semitism and deviations from absolute equality among groups, which Jewish and other historians were still making forty years ago, seem lost on Dinnerstein and Bendersky. But Dinnerstein at least notices the obvious, that anti-Semitism is now barely visible in the US (except among blacks, which he admits with a heavy heart). His explanation, however, is all too predictable. As a despiser of Christianity, he finds Christian belief to have been a sufficient cause in explaining past American anti-Semitism. Dinnerstein believes anti-Semitism is vanishing because America fortunately has become secularized. There are several problems with this intended explanation. One, Dinnerstein exaggerates the evil, American anti-Semitism, which he discusses; two,

5. Dinesh D'Souza, *The End of Racism*, (New York: Free Press, 1995), pp. 592-606.

6. Leonard Dinnerstein, *A History of American Anti-Semitism* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1994).

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many Christians who settled America, particularly Calvinists and Protestant sectarians, were never anti-Semites, and three, some of the most violent anti-Semites have been anti-Christian as well as anti-Jewish.

Surely Bendersky can find better uses for his analytic mind than rehashing the gripes of America's most successful but also most indefensibly self-pitying minority. A a self-described Jewish liberal intellectual, Phillip Weiss, has recently written a critical essay about the tendency of Jewish civic leaders to speak about their group as a persecuted minority.[7] He points out that Jews wield considerable political and financial power in the US and their view of themselves as vulnerable victims has begun to seem ludicrous — though obviously not for Bendersky. But Weiss conveniently overlooks the fact that the wall of prejudice on which older American Jews remain fixated was never as specifically anti-Semitic or as insurmountable as some suggest.

Another methodological problem comes to mind here. If Bendersky wishes to dwell on the cultural history of interwar America, he might start by looking at the major trends for that period, particularly those that led to the present. The creators of those trends were clearly not the thinkers he emphasizes, any more than S. J. Perelman or Salvatore Quasimodo can be reasonably presented as the overshadowing trendsetters of modern literature. (Unlike Grant, Stoddard and Woodruff, Perelman and Quasimodo do at least receive some mention in the *Britannica*.) Nor should one pay too much attention to intellectuals who complain about students going to gatherings of Nordic supremacists. In most colleges today *The Bell Curve* (which Bendersky treats as the equivalent of *Mein Kampf*) is not even sold in bookstores. From Martin Luther King's birthday through black history month and the feminist liturgical festival that follows, most academic bookstores and libraries showcase only therapeutically proper reading matter, from Derrick Bell and Cornell West's tirades against racist, sexist, capitalist America to lesbian manifestos. Bendersky should cool it: his own version of a reconstructed American society seems safe for the present.

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7. Philip Weiss, in New York (January 21, 1996).

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Reviews:

The Resurgence of the European Extreme Right

Piero Ignazi, *L'Estrema Destra in Europa* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1994), 260pp.

Piero Ignazi has written numerous books and articles on the Italian extreme Right.[1] In his most recent book, however, he addresses broader European concerns. Although he acknowledges the Left-Right dichotomy no longer depicts clear-cut political realities (when workers voted predominantly for labor and social-democratic parties, while the middle and upper classes voted predominantly for moderate and conservative ones), he insists on its relevance because it is still used by the media as well as by voters and, at any rate, it simplifies politics. This, however, is problematic and ultimately prevents Ignazi from grasping what is truly new about the unexpected resurgence of the extreme Right in the 1990s.

Political competition in West European democracies has become increasingly depoliticized. In the 1995 French presidential elections there were hardly any real policy differences between the Center-Right and the Center-Left candidate. Both proposed tackling unemployment through state sponsored public works. In Italy, the Left-Right dichotomy has been blurred because both sides of the political spectrum moved to the center in an attempt to appeal to moderate voters. To this end, both party coalitions sought to smooth out their rough edges. The Center-Right said it favored tax cuts but would neither eliminate superfluous state employees nor cut social spending. The Center-Left sought to assuage its image as a statist coalition. Even the Lega Nord participated in this rush toward the Center, thus diluting its policy proposals.

The disintegration of the Left-Right dichotomy exemplifies the end of the post-WWII order and the crisis of the welfare state. The turn from the mass to the catchall party was the result of the blurring of class divisions under the unprecedented economic growth of the 1960s. Both working class and conservative parties lost their *raison d'être* as unique representatives of particular social groups. During the 1970s and 1980s, huge budget deficits began to accumulate, thus limiting

1. Ignazi was the first Italian political scientist to study the extreme Right which, until recently, was regarded a taboo — notwithstanding that the Movimento Sociale Italiano-Destra Nazionale was the fourth largest Italian party. See his *Il Polo Escluso* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1989), a study of the the Italian extreme Right's origins and internal debates.

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the state's ability to cure social ills by allocating large amounts of resources. In this climate of political uncertainty, the clear-cut alternative between leftist coalitions which supported the expansion of the welfare state and rightist parties which advocated rolling back "big government" is no longer meaningful.[2] Similarly, new issues such as the environment, immigration and the expansion of international organizations cannot be understood within the old political framework. Federalism is currently being advocated by both the Right and the Left, while reservations concerning "globalization" and the growing importance of international organizations are widespread throughout the political spectrum. Although some political scientists still find the Left-Right dichotomy viable, it is generally regarded as inadequate after the end of the Cold war.

These considerations help explain the recent resurgence of the extreme right and why this phenomenon cannot be understood exclusively within the old framework of Left and Right. Ignazi begins by distinguishing between three Rights: reactionary-traditionalist, conservative and fascist. He believes the Right can be identified in terms of the following principles: "political authority, superiority of the state, the nation or the Church, which supersedes the individual, roots and traditional values, order, harmony, adherence to social and natural inequalities within the social-political realm, the sense of belonging and organic communities" (19). This is related to Norberto Bobbio's Left/Right distinction, according to which the Right stands primarily for social and political inequalities, while the Left is committed to the principle of equality.[3]

The reactionary-traditionalist Right goes back to Joseph de Maistre, Donoso Cortès and Louis Bonald. Its antagonism to modernity, predicated on a monistic order, strong state sovereignty and cultural-religious homogeneity seeks to reintroduce "the certainties and the seriousness of the pre-revolutionary transcendental order." This reactionary-traditionalist view is founded on a transcendental vision of politics and society. Man is seen as corrupt and evil. Thus society needs authority and discipline to avoid disorder and chaos. The doctrine of sovereignty is based on this negative view of humanity: the sovereign is a bridge between God and man and is entrusted with guaranteeing peace. As de Maistre points out, however, the sovereign is not omnipotent: "the biggest problem in Europe is to figure out how to circumscribe the power of the sovereign without destroying it."[4] These counterrevolutionaries were aristocrats who fought against the sovereign's attempts to overpower the estates. They saw society as an organic whole;

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2. See Alain de Benoist, "End of the Left-Right Dichotomy: The French Case," in *Telos* 102 (Winter 1995), pp. 73-90; and Marco Tarchi, "In Search of Right and Left," in *Telos* 103 (Spring 1995), pp. 181-188.

3. Norberto Bobbio, *Destra e Sinistra: Ragioni e Significati di una Distinzione Politica* (Rome: Donzelli, 1994).

4. Joseph de Maistre, cited in Carlo Galli; *I Controrivoluzionari* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1981). pp. 85-86.

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accordingly, the sovereign had to respect those institutions which stood between him and society (e.g., corporatist structures, the Catholic Church and the estates). Only the estates or the pontiff could resist sovereign power. Today this Right has very few political followers. It is made up of small groups such as Lefreve's movement or what is left of the Monarchical Party in Italy and France. Their authoritarianism has marginalized them in current political debates.

The conservative Right is an altogether different matter. Its most important ideological figures are Edmund Burke and Russell Kirk.[5] Its main difference with other Rights can be readily seen by examining Burke's reaction to the French Revolution. He was not opposed to some of the values of that revolution, but he did not approve of the way the French had overthrown the monarchy. While the French Revolution had made a violent break, thus completely altering French society, the British Revolution had been gradual. British gradualism made it possible to preserve Anglo-Saxon traditions while introducing political innovations. The conservative Right does not share the virulent anti-modernist attitude of their reactionary-traditionalist counterpart, but is satisfied with salvaging aspects of traditional society without derailing political and economic change. Prezzolini argues that "a conservative must not be a reactionary: one who wants to return to outmoded societal arrangements or one who wants to abolish labor unions. . . . A conservative is a realist. For this reason he is opposed to those who dream about political, social and economic arrangements that have never existed in the past. The past belongs to history."[6] According to Kirk, conservatism is a state of mind and, as Prezzolini emphasizes, conservatives do not believe in utopian ideologies but in limited, feasible and realistic programs.[7] Unlike the reactionary-traditionalist Right, the conservative Right has frequently entered into alliances with liberal and socialist forces. In Austria, the conservative Christian Democratic party has ruled for more than 20 years in collaboration with the Socialist party, while both German and British conservatives have occasionally formed grand coalition governments with the Left.

The conservative Right is also characterized by a fierce defense of private property. This is why it is opposed to redistributive policies. In principle, it is hostile to the welfare state, but in practice it has frequently accepted it.[8] In Italy, the

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5. See Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London: Penguin Books, 1970); Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind* (Chicago: Gateway, 1960); Giuseppe Prezzolini, *Manifesto Dei Conservatori* (Milano: Rusconi Editore,1972), Benedetto Croce, *Etica e Politica* (Laterza: Bari, 1956); and Gaetano Mosca, *La Classe Politica* (Laterza: Bari, 1972).

6. Giuseppe Prezzolini; *Manifesto dei Conservatori*, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

8. Ives Meny, *Government and Politics in Western Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 59: "Western democracies devote between 35 and 50% of their GNP to public spending; nor has this situation been brought about solely by socialist or social democratic policies. De Gaulle was responsible for the post war nationalizations and he practiced interventionist policies in the 1960s. In 1979 it was Giscard d'Estaing who completed the gradual nationalization of the steel industry."

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Christian Democrats expanded the scope of state intervention and have often worked with unions as a way to counter the popularity of the Italian Communist Party. But, whenever possible, the conservative Right has also deployed free market policies. Thus the British Conservative Party overhauled many social programs and abolished a number of workers' protection laws during Margaret Thatcher's tenure. It advocated nationalism and national unity, as did Thatcher herself during the Malvinas-Falkland war. Most recently, the French conservative Right has sanctioned nuclear tests in the South Pacific to assure French security, even in the face of strong international opposition.

The conservative faction is the strongest component within the West European Right. In this context, the British Conservative Party does not differ much from moderate and Christian Democratic parties. Thus Caciagli emphasizes that "the Christian Democrats have always been the conservative party in modern Italy. In the past, it was because of its history and position. Today, it is the result of its social basis and the interests it defends."[9] The same can be said of Germany, where the Christian Democratic Union included staunch conservatives such as Franz Joseph Strauss. Immediately after WWII, however, Christian Democratic policies in Italy were not in line with mainstream conservatism. They followed the social doctrine of the Catholic Church, which criticized both capitalism and communism as political philosophies based on materialistic values insensitive to human spirituality. Thus they criticized free market economies and advocated "social buffers" to reduce inequalities created by capitalism. Eventually, this changed as the Cold War left little room for a "third way." At any rate, given the fact that moderate voters were predominantly rightist and anti-communist, Christian Democratic parties had to downplay their criticisms of the market economy.

Ignazi understands fascism as a rightist response to modernity: a mass movement seeking to revolutionize society not by altering socio-economic relations but by changing values to oppose liberalism, democracy and capitalism. Fascism precipitates an ethical revolution by imposing values such as authority, hierarchy, honor, loyalty and the supremacy of the national community. These values have traditionally been associated with the Right. Moreover, some fascist policies such as strengthening the state and aggressive foreign policies are similar to those of the traditional-reactionary and the conservative Right. What differentiates fascist from conservative policies is their more radical character with respect to, e.g., nationalism, interpreted by Giovanni Gentile, Dino Grandi, and Alfredo Rocco as a secular religion. Moreover, fascism is much more opposed to capitalism than the conservative Right. In fact, fascist socio-economic policies are predicated on a corporatist "third way" that defends private property but opposes unchecked free market economics.

What separates fascism from the reactionary-traditionalist Right is modernity.

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9. Mario Caciagli, "Il Resistibile Declino della Democrazia Cristiana," in Gianfranco Pasquino, ed., *Il Sistema Politico Italiano* (Bari: Laterza, 1985), p. 103.

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Fascism accepts mass political organizations such as parties and unions, state intervention and mass communication. Fascism mobilized the populace against democracy and liberalism, while the reactionary-traditionalist Right sought to limit mass political participation by strengthening the dictatorial powers of the sovereign. Moreover, fascism was ambiguous toward the monarchy — at times even opposed to it. According to Sternell, fascism cannot be understood as simply a rightist mass movement. Rather, it is the result of the coming together of two political and ideological forces: the non-Marxist Left (anarcho-syndacalists, patriotic socialists and corporatists) and the nationalist Right.[10] The former accounts for fascism's "third way" policies, the latter for its authoritarian-nationalist policies. Fascism was initially formed by Left splinter groups dissatisfied with the way both social democracy and Marxist internationalism had come to accept capitalism and democracy. Fascist leaders never really dropped leftist ideas and policies. During the Republic of Salò, Mussolini reintroduced the original fascist social philosophy. He launched socialist reforms and adopted a very anti-monarchist stance. During the last days of fascism, the movement returned to its radical origins.

Many extreme Right parties are the heirs of fascism. Here Ignazi observes that there are many terms used in the literature that do not travel well and do not help understand the phenomenon. He rejects "far Right" because this term is too narrow and was initially conceived to describe a particular emotional state of mind, (such as a predisposition toward extremism and violence). He also rejects "radical Right" because he believes this term can only be used to describe those terrorist movements which sought to subvert democracy after WWII.[11] For Ignazi, many extreme Right parties do not accept liberal-democratic values but, unlike the radical Right, do not engage in subversive activities. Rather, extreme Right parties actively seek an electoral consensus. Ignazi also rejects the term "New Right," since he claims this term can only be used to refer to two very distant political cultures. First, New Right is frequently used in the US to refer to the neo-conservative movement, whose worldview does not coincide with that of the extreme Right.[12] The latter might share the same dislike for bureaucracy and "big government," but it has very different long-term goals. Second, the term is used in Europe to refer to Alain de

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10. Zeev Sternell, *The Birth of Fascist Ideology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

11. See Giorgio Galli, *La Crisi Italiana e la Destra Internazionale* (Milan: Mondadori, 1976). See also Franco Ferraresi; "The Radical Right in Postwar Italy," in *Politics and Society*, Vol. XVI, No. 1 (1988), pp. 71-121.

12. For the main text of the European New Right, see Alain de Benoist, *Les Idees à L'Endroit* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1980); Alain de Benoist, *Vu de Droite — Anthologie Critique des Idees Contemporaines* (Paris: Copernic, 1977). See also Pierre-André Taguieff, "La Strategie Culturelle de la Nouvelle Droit en France (1968-1983)," in Union des Ecrivans, *Vous avez dit Fascisme?* (Paris: Arthand/Montalba, 1983), pp. 13-152. For an exhaustive account in English, see the special issue on "The French New Right: New Right-New Left-New Paradigm?" in *Telos* (Winter1993-Spring 1994).

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Benoist's political and cultural movement. Ignazi claims that the European New Right does not have "any relation with extreme Right parties." (43) Moreover, the New Right's worldview differs drastically from that of the extreme Right.

The extreme Right is influenced by various sources. In Italy, the most widely read authors are Giovanni Gentile and Julius Evola, but there is also interest in the jurist Alfredo Rocco and in the historian Gioacchino Volpe.[13] In Britain, the extreme right focuses on Oswald Mosley. In France, the most widely read authors are Charles Maurras and Maurice Barre. These authors are also widely read by the New Right, but the latter has broken with nationalism and has opted for European federalism. Iganzi defines an extreme Right party as follows: "it must: 1) be positioned at the extreme Right on the Left-Right continuum, with no other party to its Right (unless it belongs to the same party family); 2) express an ideology related to fascism; 3) express attitudes, values and issues opposing the liberal-democratic party system." (47) Within the extreme Right, he distinguishes between two "subtypes": The first includes traditional extreme Right parties such as the neo-fascist Movimento Sociale Italiano-Destra Nazionale, the Dutch CP' 86, the Vlaams Block in Belgium, the neo-nazi British National Party, the French National Front and the German NDP. For half a century the Movimento Sociale Italiano-Destra Nazionale (now renamed Alleanza Nazionale) has been the strongest neo-fascist party in Europe. It has always consisted of two wings: a majoritarian national-conservative wing heir of what Renzo De Felice defines as "regime-fascists"; and a leftist, revolutionary and anti-capitalist wing, heir of the "movement-fascists."[14] While the former has defended traditional Right positions such as the death penalty, a strong presidential regime and anti-communism, the latter has consistently criticized the market economy, called for workers participation and the socialization of the means of production. The second type includes post-industrial extreme Right parties such as the French Front National, Germany's *Republikaner* party, and the Austrian Liberal Party. These are recent political organizations and most of their members did not experience historical fascism. Post-industrial extreme Right parties rise in advanced capitalist countries as a response to problems such as voter dissatisfaction with established parties and political corruption, Third World mass immigration, inner-city violence and social alienation. While virulently opposed to parliament and in favor of a strong authoritarian state, the French National Front does not fully adhere to a fascist worldview. Its socio-economic policies clearly conflict with fascist corporatism and its main think tank, the Club de l'Horloge, calls for a free market economy with little state intervention.

Ignazi lists four factors responsible for the success of the extreme Right. The

13. On the political culture of the Movimento Sociale Italiano-Destra Nazionale see Piero Ignazi; "La Cultura Politica Del MSI," in *Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica*, Vol. XIX, No. 3 (December 1989), pp. 431-465.

14. Renzo De Felice, *Intervista sul Fascismo* (Bari: Laterza, 1976).

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first is the rise of neo-conservatism, which contributed both to Reagan's and Thatcher's electoral victories during the early 1980s. This political philosophy vindicates the viability of a free market economy with little or no state intervention. Neo-conservatism argues that the state is too strong and unchecked. To meet many social demands, the government is forced to tax and borrow. High taxes hinder new investments while the state's expanded role in the economy limits the market and creates non-competitive situations, with monopolists controlling market niches. The welfare state must be overhauled and the government must restrict itself to a few areas such as foreign policy and internal order. One of its main concerns, the critique of "big government," has been picked up by the extreme Right. Thus the French National Front is very critical of labor unions, which it considers unaccountable organizations. The anti-tax party represents Danish groups opposed to the high level of taxation.

The second factor concerns law and order. As crime, immigration and unemployment grows in large cities, many voters turn to extreme Right parties which promise tougher legislative measures against street violence and mass immigration. The third factor is the legitimation crisis of many West European party systems, which manifests itself in the increasing number of no-shows at the polls and by the decreasing membership of established political parties. The fourth factor is the rightward shift of many Western European party systems. Thus conservative parties are taking increasingly uncompromising positions with regard to issues such as immigration, abortion, etc.

The French case seems to support Ignazi's claim that there has been a shift from the extreme Left to the extreme Right. During the 1960s and 1970s, ideological polarization came from the Left. For more than 30 years the French Communist Party was the dominant Left political force. It had more votes than the non-communist Left and it could mobilize workers since it controlled France's largest trade unions. In 1978 there was a shift in the Left political balance. The socialists out-polled the communists which, as a result, no longer dominated the Left and lost considerable influence over trade unions. Today, the French Communist Party is in decline and the Left overall is less radical than in the past, while the National Front is the strongest anti-system party in France. This party does not openly advocate the end of French democracy but it is very critical of multi-party systems. But the Italian case seems to refute Ignazi's thesis. In Italy, the neo-fascist Movimento Sociale Italiano-Destra Nazionale has recently undergone considerable ideological modernization. Renamed Alleanza Nazionale, the party has severed all ties with fascism and has taken on more conservative positions. Currently, there is an electoral shift toward the Right, but Rifondazione Comunista remains the only true anti-system party.

At any rate, the center-periphery cleavage has recently re-emerged in West European politics. Federalist and populist forces have emerged to fight the state's monopoly of politics. Rejection of social engineering, preservation of ethnic or regional identities, opposition to higher taxes and other burdensome

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state constraints provide these movements with their *raison d'être*. This helps explain the rise of the Italian Northern League, the resilience of the Scottish National Party and the Catalan Autonomist movement. Their electoral success is a function of their critique of state centralism and the vindication of a populist politics opposed to the integration promoted by the state. These parties have called for constitutional reforms along federal lines predicated on subsidiarity and fiscal autonomy.[15]

Most extreme Right parties advocate corporatist programs that stress the need for national unity against the divisive effects of class war. Similarly, The Movimento Sociale Italiano-Destra Nazionale was the only Italian party that advocated union participation in the internal decision-making of corporations — a version of the German *Mitbestimmung*. During Pino Rauti's tenure in office (1990-1992), this party developed a quasi-revolutionary political platform based on opposition to the free market and the search for a "third way" between capitalism and communism. On a similar vein, during the 1980s the British National Front opposed Thatcher's free market policies. As Ignazi argues, the National Front "supported the miner's strike throughout the 1984-85 period and emphasized the need for a return to the environment (i.e., the ecologist element of tradition) by demonizing the city as the place of physical and moral depravity. Moreover, the National Front opposed both civil and military nuclear plants" (68).

With regard to the center-periphery cleavage, the extreme Right has historically taken a nationalist and state centralist position. Alleanza Nazionale, for example, favors a strong central state to counter the secessionist tendencies of the Northern League. Most British National Party rallies rave against the Irish independence movement or Scottish and Welsh Nationalists. The Austrian Liberal Party is also in favor of national unity and is strongly opposed to European unity. The Republikaner party was a staunch supporter of German unification. During German unification this party was overwhelmed by Kohl's CDU, which was able

15. Recent work on the extreme Right in the US and England have often referred to "Right-wing populism," which is both a contradictory and a confusing concept. Historically, populism has always been a transversal movement, i.e., nether Right nor Left. In Russia, the populists were anti-capitalists who wanted to preserve the traditional agrarian communities in the face of socio-economic change. At the beginning of this century, populists in the US supported direct democracy and anti-trust legislation to block monopolies. In Argentina, the Peronist unions were populist in that they wanted to mobilize workers against parliament and wealthy landowners. Thus populism should not be used to refer exclusively to extreme Right parties. For a misleading and dogmatic use of this term, see Hans G. Betz "The New Politics of Resentment. Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties in Western Europe," in *Comparative Politics*, Vol. XXVI (1993), pp. 413-427. For a careful re-examination of the populist experience in the US, see Christopher Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and its Critics* (New York: Norton, 1991). For a detailed inquiry into current concepts of populism, see the two special issues on populism in *Telos* 103 and 104 (Spring and Summer 1995).

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to attract the nationalist electorate. The Dutch CP '86 is also a classic example of an extreme Right party advocating strong state sovereignty. It adheres to "the concept of the organic state so that all those elements in the way of the state's viability should be eliminated" (120) and advocates tougher measures against crime and illegal immigration and wants a stronger and more active police force.

Most extreme Right parties also advocate constitutional reforms, such as the National Front's call for a stronger presidential regime in France. The deviant case is Vlaams Block, which opposes a strong nation-state. It actively pursues the interests of the Flemish ethnic group which, on most issues, is in outright opposition to those of the other Belgian ethnic group. The extreme Right usually sides with the Catholic Church against enlightenment values. It stands for family values, respect for traditions and customs, hierarchy, order and discipline, and respect for authority. It does not advocate respect for authority as such. Frequently, such parties are the most virulent opponents of Left coalition governments. They advocate respect for what they consider legitimate authority: a political order reflecting nationalist and traditional values. In Italy, the extreme Right has a very conservative position with regard to abortion and divorce. A poll conducted by Ignazi reveals that 54% of extreme Right party members are in favor of mandatory Catholic teachings in public schools.[16] The Vlaams Block, the Austrian Liberal Party and the Front National strongly sympathize with Catholic values. At times, the extreme Right takes positions different from those of the Catholic Church's social teachings. Thus immigration is an issue which separates the Italian clergy from Alleanza Nazionale. In December 1995, Dini's technocratic government sought to apply tougher laws against illegal immigrants. This measure was backed by parts of the Left and by all the parties of the Center-Right alliance. The Catholic Church strongly opposed this measure.

Overall, the extreme Right has taken an ambiguous position with regard to the establishment/anti-establishment cleavage. Some extreme Right parties are very concerned about the environment and are heavily involved in preserving it as an integral component of the national identity of a people. The minority wing of the now defunct Movimento Sociale Italiano-Destra Nazionale (Rauti's group), was the first European extreme Right faction to take up environmental issues. On the other hand, there are some extreme Right parties (e.g., the French National Front in its support for Chirac's nuclear testing) opposed to environmental issues. The extreme Right has been a strong opponent of "political correctness" and 1960s neo-liberal views. Thus the Vlaams Bloc defends very traditionalist and reactionary positions. Ignazi writes that this party "upholds traditional values against permissive policies and feminism by intensively mobilizing against abortion" (107). Other extreme Right parties are very concerned about "quality of life" issues. The Danish FRDP is a single issue political organization (i.e., anti-tax). This party has

16. Piero Ignazi, "La Cultura Politica del MSI," in *Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica*, Vol. XIX, No. 3 (December 1989), p.453.

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emphasized the obsolesce of the workers-middle class cleavage and is very critical of political parties regarded as bankrupt organizations (80-81).

Ignazi sees a silent counterrevolution taking place in Europe, evident in the electoral growth of extreme Right parties which compete with the conservative Right to produce an electoral shift toward the Right. This counterrevolution is allegedly altering the structure of West European party systems and poses a direct challenge to the viability of liberal-democracy. Ignazi is very thorough in assessing what led to the rise of extreme Right parties and makes some predictions concerning the future evolution of the European extreme Right in general. But today in Europe there is a new dichotomy (pro-Europe vs. anti-Europe) which cuts across the Left-Right continuum and will be the focus of political debate in the foreseeable future.

Within each European member state there are conflicting reactions toward the strict economic criteria set by the Maastricht Treaty, the creation of a single European currency and the plan for more cohesive European political institutions.[17] Extreme Right parties are opposed to a federal Europe because this process weakens the nation-state's sovereignty. Opposition to European unity is not only made up of strange bedfellows (i.e., a negative coalition that does not stand for a coherent program); it cuts across the Left-Right cleavage. The Italian and French party systems are exemplary cases where this unusual alliance has come together. In 1991, both the Movimento Sociale Italiano-Destra Nazionale and the Front National as well as the Italian and French communist parties voted against the Maastricht Treaty. All four parties currently oppose the austerity and deficit-reducing measures that the Italian and French governments have proposed to meet the strict budget criteria set by the Maastricht Treaty.[18]

The extreme Right opposition to European unity is driven by two motives: First, both the National Front and Alleanza Nazionale receive most of their support from working class voters. According to Meny, the National Front "has attracted more than the traditional right-wing supporters; surveys carried out in 1988 showed the breadth of its cross-class support, while one poll taken from late 1991 put it as the leading party among France's working class."[19] Alleanza Nazionale's support is concentrated in the poorest and most underdeveloped

17. National currencies will be substituted by a single European currency if each member state abides to the following criteria: 1) the annual national debt should not be greater than 3%; 2) the overall national debt should not be greater than 60% of the GNP; 3) inflation should not be greater than 1.5% of the average inflation rate of the 3 most stable member states; 4) each national currency can participate within the SME if it has not suffered devaluation during the two years before the coming into being of the third phase of monetary union; and 5) interest rates for long term deposits cannot be greater than 2% of that of any currency of the three most stable member states.

18. Panebianco thinks that a victory of the center-Right in Italy could produce a foreign policy made up of "nationalist stances that could isolate Italy from Europe." See Angelo Panebianco, "I Due Poli Incompleti," in *Il Corriere Della Sera* (August 22, 1995).

19. Ives Meny, *Government and Politics in Western Europe*, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

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Southern regions of Italy. The tough austerity policies of many European governments will take away entitlements previously enjoyed by the working class. Thus the extreme Right fights against cuts that threaten to erode their voters' standards of living.

Second, the extreme Right still thinks in terms of the nation-state as the only legitimate source of sovereign political power. In fact, both the French National Front and Alleanza Nazionale oppose European unity because it threatens the sovereignty of the nation-state. This state of affairs points to the inadequacy of Ignazi's thesis. No doubt, in terms of the old categories, there has been a shift from the Left to the Right. But at the same time the very distinction between Left and Right became superfluous because the historical divisions on which it was based disappeared. The nation-state and the concept of sovereignty itself, which have defined politics since at least the 17th century, have become obsolete, and no movement predicated on these outdated concepts can possibly define a new era. Moreover, such a notion as the "extreme Right" makes sense only in opposition to a Left which no longer exists. It is becoming increasingly clear that the main political division in Western Europe is not even that between advocates and opponents of European Union but between a managerial elite with privileged access to knowledge, expertise, etc. and a marginalized populace unable to keep pace with new developments.[20] Opponents of this New Class may appear to be on the Right, even the extreme Right of this self-styled "Left." But clearly neither side corresponds to the old categories of what has defined political life in the 290th century. New categories are needed to analyze a qualitatively new political configuration.

Paolo Morisi

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20. For a recent re-examination of the American populist legacy and the rise of the New Class, see Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven*, *op. cit.*, and *The Revolt of the Elites and the Betrayal of Democracy* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995). See also the special issue on "Populism vs. the New Class," in *Telos* 88 (Summer 1991).

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Between Liberalism and Fascism

Franklin Hugh Adler, *Italian Industrialists from Liberalism to Fascism: The Political Development of the Industrial Bourgeoisie, 1906-1934* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 458pp.

The complicated and at times contradictory relation between Italy's industrialists and fascism has been clouded by facile partisan interpretations. Franklin Adler's new book helps considerably in clarifying matters. First, it addresses a long standing debate about whether capitalists manipulated and exploited the fascists for their own interests, or the other way around. Second, it examines the weaknesses of Italian liberalism and the reasons why it succumbed so easily to fascism. Third, it deals with the constitution of Mussolini's fascist regime and its various internal currents.[1] Finally, it places the behavior of Italian industrialists within a structural and historical context.

His analysis does not fall victim to the unconvincing reductionism according to which fascism was simply the creature of a capitalist system in crisis. He argues that the crisis of Italian capitalism and the rise of fascism should be seen as two relatively distinct but parallel developments within the context of the crisis of the Italian liberal state which, at the end of the 19th century, was not in the hands of a hegemonic bourgeoisie. Largely constituted and governed by a political class — predominantly lawyers — whose social and intellectual horizons were not the same as those of the industrialists, Italian liberalism did not develop any organic links with capitalism. Before industrialization, in the 1880s and 1890s, Italy's industrial class was relatively small: "at the time of unification, industry accounted for only 20% of the gross national product; it was restricted in scope mainly to textiles still at the handicraft and cottage stage and limited geographically to principally the northern regions of Lombardy, Piedmont, and Veneto" (19). The liberal state's prevailing economic ideology was *laissez-faire*. Its only significant role in the economy was the development of the country's infrastructure.[2]

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1. For a related analysis of these currents, see Marcello Veneziani, *La Rivoluzione Conservatrice in Italia: Genesi e Sviluppo della "Ideologia Italiana" fino ai Nostri Giorni* (Varese: Sugarco Edizioni, 1994).

2. On the liberal state's economic policies in this period, see Antonio Cardini, *Stato Liberale e Protezionismo in Italia (1890-1900)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1981); and Giorgio Amato, "L'Interesse Pubblico e le Attività Economiche Private," in *Politica del Diritto*, No. 3 (1970), pp. 448-462.

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Relations between the liberal state and the industrialists started to change in the 1890s, with the rapid expansion of Italy's industrial base and a shift in the liberal state's economic ideology. As the economy expanded, the "so-called night-watchman" role of the liberal state also changed. Along with other European states, Italy also entered a period of state-protected economic development. Important sectors of the economy such as shipbuilding, steel, armaments, etc., were protected by tariff barriers. While this state of affairs drew Italy's political class more deeply into the country's economic order, it did not lead to a convergence between the political class and the nascent industrial bourgeoisie — except for those industrialists in industrial sectors protected by tariffs and state subsidies.

The early 20th century Italian liberal state did not directly serve the interests of the industrial bourgeoisie. Under Giolliti's leadership, the government, in theory, adopted a mediating position between the emergent industrialists and the industrial working class. Also, parliament remained an institution dominated by elected officials with little direct experience in industry. Within this context, Italian industrialists developed a self-consciousness which led to a "heightened sense of difference from the lawyer politicians" (26). They gradually carved out their own organizational and ideological space, and moved beyond the limited sectoral associations (e.g., Società Promotrice dell'Industria Nazionale, Associazione fra gli Industriali Metallurgici, Associazione Laniera Italiana, etc.) they had previously used to articulate their interests. The Lega Industriale di Torino (LIT) would serve as the springboard for the subsequent national representative body for all Italian industrialists: Confindustria (Confederazione Generale dell'Industria Italiana).

In addition, Italian industrialists saw a need to articulate an ideology that attempted to do more than simply justify their own narrow economic concerns. They sought to provide the liberal state with a legitimate economic identity beyond social and political divisions. The Italian industrialists' new productivism espoused the virtues of technological innovation and the employment of modern industrial techniques. Many of them became followers of Frederick Taylor's principles of modern management. The President of Fiat admired Henry Ford and built a modern assembly line factory in Turin modeled after a Ford plant in Detroit. "The LIT's major ideological imperative was to create in the public consciousness an identity between the interests of industry and the national interests, a totalizing conception within which the interests of industry would not merely compete with the particularistic interests of the classes and class fragments but purport to reflect the universal aspirations of a modernizing society" (56). Their objective was to achieve what is now prevalent in the US, i.e., a hegemonic position so that all discussion concerning the creation of wealth, issues of distribution, and labor relations would assume *a priori* the legitimacy of a capitalist mode of production. Italian industrialists sought to accomplish what the political class had not: provide the liberal state with a set of principles transcending social and political cleavages.

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Italian industrialists did not succeed in turning productivism into such an ideology. Led by Gino Olivetti, their association did, however, succeed in using productivism to define their interests broadly and as a justification for maintaining absolute control over production. This was a particularly important issue since the country's major labor unions increasingly sought to introduce workers' councils into the factories. The industrialists were determined to relegate labor to a subordinate position in the decision-making process. As Adler argues, however, they were not a reactionary force. Except for large land-owners and some traditional industrial areas, Italian industrialists were not against unions. In fact, many argued that unions were essential to a modern form of capitalism. While they conceded that the representation of labor by unions was necessary, they were not willing to accept that unions went beyond defending economic interests. In sum, workers had to recognize that "the technical hierarchy of production was a domain in which management was to exercise absolute and undivided authority; and, second, that politics was to be kept outside of the factory and not intrude on syndical relations" (197).

In the pre-WWI era, the subordination of labor to managerial rule was the primary preoccupation of the *sindacati patronali*. Confindustria sought to have the state defend private property and, consequently, absolute managerial control over production. Industrialists were united to block all union efforts to introduce workers' self-management. By 1912 they had succeeded and in 1919 and 1920 they mobilized to prevent the same thing. The "great Turin lockout" was part of a calculated strategy to break once and for all the radical elements in the labor movement. Olivetti, Confindustria's leading theoretician, was determined to combat workers' councils at all costs. In his eyes, workers' councils represented a dual threat. First, "they threatened to undermine the continuing institutionalization of class conflict by competing with labor syndicates for the primary allegiance of the rank and file." Second, "they threatened the orderly development of the productive process by challenging ever more strongly the hierarchical factory structure, over which managerial authority had to be absolute" (205).

The defeat of the councils movement constituted a major victory for Confindustria. It showed industrialists who remained skeptical of a national association the benefits of collective action. Their triumph also had political significance. During the conflict with labor over factory councils, the Italian government did not side with the industrialists on many important issues. Giolliti thought workers' councils might be a prelude to class collaboration. Thus, he was not inclined to use the state's repressive apparatus to end to the workers' occupation of factories, especially in Turin. His government assumed the position of mediator. Because of this attitude, the industrialists were forced to make some wage concessions. From this experience, they learned an important lesson: that they had to define their own interests clearly and maintain a unified position in dealing with the government. This remained the case even under fascism.

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Industrialists did not see the 1923 fascist ascent to power as a break with the liberal state. In the context of the political and economic crises of the post-war period, Mussolini's movement appeared as a positive development. As Adler argues, "it was less a matter of industrialists forsaking liberalism for fascism but rather . . . a growing convergence between liberalism and fascism" (248). The convergence reflected the failure of the traditional liberal state to deal effectively with mass politics. This failure left it bereft of any real solutions to the country's social, political, and economic problems. Italian industrialists, however, were not able to reconstitute the fragmented and weak liberal state. On the contrary, as Adler notes, "industrialists proved capable only of defending their own particular sectoral interest, not generalizing that interest ideologically and organizationally to encompass the whole of the bourgeoisie and ultimately the whole of society" (249-50).

Italy's industrial bourgeoisie never saw fascism as their instrument. In fact, unlike their rural counterparts, they did not rely on fascist "thugs" to repress labor. They assumed that they would be able to influence the fascist regime to pursue social and economic policies favorable to Confindustria. They thought Mussolini would bolster the liberal state's authority. Few subscribed to the more radical aspects of Italian fascism. As the fascists consolidated their hold on power and sought to extend their control over society, Italian industrialists relied on their association to protect their interests and influence the government's economic policies.

Adler's analysis of how Confindustria adapted to fascist rule and dealt with various fascist tendencies constitutes the most interesting part of the book. Contrary to what many industrialists had assumed, fascism was not simply a form of liberalism with authority: it was a self-contradictory movement composed of radical tendencies, some deeply rooted in an anti-capitalist tradition. At the center of these contradictions stood Mussolini. Initially, he acted as brake on the more radical fascist elements, who wanted to transform the liberal into a corporatist state. Italian industrialists convinced Mussolini of the dangers of subordinating managerial authority to fascist officials with little or no managerial skills. They were particularly worried about the elimination of all independent associations and their transformation into formal extensions of the corporatist state.

By allying itself with the traditional state bureaucracy and effectively exploiting its near monopoly on important economic data, Confindustria was able to transform itself into a powerful interest group. As in the pre-fascist period, its main objective was to prevent a redefinition of capitalist property relations. In the pre-fascist period, the threat came from an emergent industrial working class; in the fascist period it came from ideologues such as Rossoni, who wanted Mussolini to accelerate the establishment of a corporatist order and the subordination of Confindustria to the higher interests of the fascist state. Industrialists interpreted the demand for this subordination as a direct challenge to their

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control over their property. As Adler notes, this was a delicate matter. Although they were a powerful interest group, industrialists were in competition with powerful forces within the fascist party. Rossoni, in particular, attacked Italian capitalists as parasites and hostile to the fascist corporatist order (387).

Thanks to Olivetti's strategic talents, Confindustria outmaneuvered Rossoni, as it had done during the 1919-1920 Turin strikes, with Antonio Gramsci, the workers' councils leading theoretician. While Confindustria was eventually forced to identify itself with the fascist order, it did so without forsaking its autonomy. In fact, it enhanced its own authority: "Confindustria now became the exclusive, legally sanctioned representative of all industry, extending its control over firms that had formerly remained outside the associational fold" (379). In this respect, Confindustria became part of the corporatist order without becoming subordinate to it.

Confindustria's success in protecting the industrialists' interests was a result of its ability to convince Mussolini that a capitalist system was not incompatible with a fascist state. Between 1923 and 1930, Italian industrialists were able to do so rather easily. Following the American stock market crash in 1929 and a shift toward an expansionist fascist state, things changed. Italian capitalists could no longer justify managerial autonomy as the *sine qua non* of a productive and prospering economy. As the economy floundered and many industrialists turned to the state for help, there was a decline in the privileged position Confindustria once enjoyed. As the Depression deepened, "Mussolini's criticism of capitalism and the bourgeoisie grew progressively more demagogic . . . [to the point of questioning] whether the crisis was merely another cyclical phenomenon or 'the transition from one epoch of civilization to another'" (419).

As in the past, Confindustria confronted the crisis by trying to assert its influence over policies and decisions it did not have direct control over. With the growth of the fascist state's control over the economy, Confindustria was increasingly ". . . unable to block or modify significantly legislation it judged inimical to industry's interest." What it was able to do, according to Adler, was to ensure in the actual execution of policy that the 'exigencies of production' would be respected and "non-cooperation would be tolerated" (424). Overall, Confindustria was less successful in its new strategy of mollifying fascist policy than in the past. While the association was still able to exploit divisions within the regime, Italian industrialists found themselves largely in a reactive mode. By the mid-1930s, Confindustria played no active role in the formulation of the fascist regime's economic policies. While private property continued to be respected, the fascist state increasingly mobilized economic resources for expansionists and, in the eyes of many industrialists, non-productive purposes.

What Adler's analysis of Italian industrialists and their relation to the liberal and fascist states shows is that neither political regime reflected their primary interests. Obviously, for different reasons, they saw themselves confronted with a

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political class not of their own making. More importantly, they confronted a political class that did not always share their ideological vision of a prosperous capitalist society. In this respect, Italian industrialists had to organize to defend their narrow economic interests and to insert them into a broader socio-economic framework. As Adler shows, Confindustria, under Olivetti's able leadership, succeeded in the first task. It had more difficulty in the second. During the liberal period, its vision of society and of the economy was challenged by new social groups such as the industrial workers, and not entirely shared by a political class with a rather different historical and sociological formation than that of the industrialists. Under the fascists, Italian industrialists were in a constant struggle with radical elements. While they succeeded in protecting their basic interests, it is clear from Adler's analysis that they were never the dominant force.

Adler's rich historical account goes far beyond Roland Sarti's seminal study of the same subject.[3] It succeeds in stripping the debate over the relation between industrialists and fascism of many of the facile assumptions that have often clouded the issue. Fascism was not the stepchild of a capitalist system in crisis. Rather, it was a response to the failure of the liberal state to effectively manage the modernization of post-Risorgimento Italy. By organizing themselves collectively, Italian industrialists sought to insert themselves into the complex political, social, and economic modernization process they had helped unleash. Yet, they never succeeded in becoming a hegemonic bloc in either the liberal or the fascist order.

Dwayne Woods

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3. Roland Sarti, *Fascism and the Industrial Leadership in Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

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The New Franciscans' Masterplan

Charles Siegel, *The Preservationist Manifesto* (Berkeley: Northbrae Books, 1995), 160 pp. $12.95.

Despite its various limitations, *The Preservationist Manifesto* is a useful contribution to the development of a new radical political agenda. While a manifesto has to remain somewhat general, Siegel does address fundamental problems such as the destruction of the conditions and institutions necessary for autonomy and democracy. The proposed politics of preservationism is meant to restore and sustain precisely those conditions. In order to start with a clean slate, however, Siegal must locate himself beyond the political constraints of either Right or Left politics. Thus preservationist politics is not necessarily opposed to either side, but seeks to embrace the original positive moments of both, while rejecting their present political form. In other words, Siegel assumes that, if these old political distinctions are not altogether obsolete, they at least have to be transcended within a new framework. In this he is in step with some of the more perceptive contemporary political analyses.[1] Lauding the conservatives' emphasis on political decentralization, Siegel is quick to caution, however, that their blind faith in the free market overlooks the destructive impact multinational economic institutions have on institutions such as the family, local government and the community. In addition, while the conservative Right is presumably "preservational" toward family and neighborhood, it ultimately succumbs to technological fetishism. This attachment to modernist ideas is precisely what has undermined concrete individuality in favor of today's society of bureaucratically-managed alienated individuals.

Though Siegel seems unaware of the recent resurgence of populism[2] — a not unusual shortcoming among ex-leftists who see it as a terminally right-wing movement — he articulates a typically populist hostility toward impersonal corporate powers able to buy influence and manipulate communities. His analysis, however, is not at all clear concerning the linkage between capital and

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1. See Alain de Benoist, "End of the Left-Right Dichotomy: The French Case," in *Telos* 102 (Winter 1995), pp. 73-90; and Marco Tarchi, "In Search of Right and Left," in *Telos* 103 (Spring 1995), pp. 181-188.

2. For the most interesting discussion of this development, see Christopher Lasch, *The True and only Heaven: Progress and its Critics* (New York: Norton, 1991) and *The Revolt of the Elites and the Betrayal of Democracy* (New York: Norton, 1995). See also the two special issue on populism in *Telos* 103 (Spring 1995) and *Telos* 104 (Summer 1995), as well as the earlier issue on "Populism vs. the New Class," in Telos 88 (Summer 1991).

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the federal government. Similarly, he tends to treat all conservatives as a homogenous group without any internal differences. Thus, he blurs the complexities and dynamics of the actual political landscape.[3] Ironically, this ignorance of the Right and its history results in the embarrassing predicament of rediscovering ideological wheels conservatives have been rolling at least since the French Revolution. Not only is the preservationist critique of rationalism, the Enlightenment and liberal politics in general a faded xerox of standard conservative philosophy, but even Siegel's manifesto's very title has an illustrious conservative forerunner. Far from simply popping out of Siegel's head some bright California afternoon, the concept of "preservationism" was first deployed by Edmund Burke almost two centuries ago for exactly the same reasons: to criticize the excesses of the Left of his time.[4]

Not unexpectedly, therefore, Siegel's major critical efforts are mostly directed against the Left, with whose politics and history he seems to be much better acquainted with than the Right. According to him, since the late 1960s the Left has advocated environmental conservation. It has identified as the problem precisely what Siegel uncritically assumes the conservative Right actively supports — unrestrained growth, technology and a free market (128-29). Big corporations manage to buy influence to determine environmental policy by drawing doomsday scenarios of economic stagnation, lost jobs and lowered standards of living. For the Left, the ideology of growth leads not only to the continued erosion of the environment but also to community disintegration — which is why Siegel sees it as the major voice for anti-growth sentiments and thus a vital source of "preservationist politics."

Yet the Left also suffers from its own version of "ideological retardation" by failing to see a self-contradictory connection between their preservational concerns and the social engineering inextricably bound with their "political correctness." While defending the environment against corporate interests and the culture of growth, the Left also advocates centralized and bureaucratically managed programs that undermine the authority and autonomy of families,

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3. For a discussion of the varieties of the various groups often uncritically called "conservative," see Paul Gottfried, *The Conservative Movement*, revised edition (New York: Twayne, 1993); and Paul Piccone, "The Crisis of American Conservatism," in *Telos* 74 (Winter 87-88). Consider the case of Patrick Buchanan's recent insurgent candidacy. Speaking a populist language and expressing a new kind of conservative politics, Buchanan was all but threatened with excommunication from the Republican Party. While much of this hysteria may be attributed to the suspicion that he would drive out a huge bloc of voters from the party by seeking to overturn Roe v. Wade, it was his attack on big corporations and the Federal Government (Buchanan's criticism of NAFTA and GATT) that sent Republican apparatchiks frantically leaking to the mass media that Buchanan was seeking a rapprochement with socialism.

4. For a brief account of Burke's version of "preservationism," see Russell A. Kirk, ed., *The Portable Conservative Reader* (New York: Viking, 1982), pp. xiiiff.

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schools, communities and local government. This is exemplified by the persistence of an outmoded "progressivist" thinking born of the struggles of the past two centuries against industrial dislocations, i.e., struggles against pre-modern institutions. However, what may have been "progressive" in opposition to feudalism is now a way of thinking not only out of touch with the present but also unable to criticize its own pathogenic mode of domination (123).

One of the strengths of this manifesto is its willingness to challenge Left pretensions and self delusions. When Siegel argues that it is not the proper function of government to "create jobs" since this approach ends up treating people as passive clients, when he criticizes "day care" as a way of ensuring fairness and gender equity or simply relief for overworked families, or when he claims that strong and intact families rather than expenditure on education are the fundamental indicators of learning potential, he successfully demystifies standard Left superstition (63-65, 67 and 81). Educational reformers such as Jonathan Kozol, who advocate more expenditures as the solution to all educational problems, or social reformers calling for more day care centers as the answer to family disintegration, are not the only ones that come under criticism for undermining the family and the community — and therefore autonomy and democracy. So do economic liberals calling for more effective government programs to create jobs, as well as "professional" environmentalists seeking more direct influence on regional planning and resource allocation. All of these projects presuppose increased technocratic control, central planning, and professional management — precisely what leads to the disempowerment of individuals (109-112). In accord with his intuitive but unacknowledged populist sentiments, Siegel understands that the socially destructive outcomes of these projects invariably wind up legitimating technocrats and bureaucrats at the expense of self-determination (117).

Siegel's preservationist politics deals specifically with five basic domains that have been eroded by growth-obsessed thinking: neighborhood, family, school, work, and environment. It seeks to preserve, restore or create the conditions necessary for democracy by re-rooting the individual within interdependent and self-governing local communities. The main objective is to reconstitute the basic fabric of social life. The whole approach is predicated on decentralization, subsidiarity, and communitarianism. The alternative is the continued destruction wrought by impersonal powers of transnational corporations and massive state intervention — large scale technocratic schemes designed to facilitate growth at the expense of community. The paradox here is that this destruction of community life and the subsequent weakening of individual identity necessitate further bureaucratic intervention in the guise of the therapeutic state to repair the damage.

The re-rooting of the individual in the community begins as a demographic problem. Single use technocratic planning must be replaced by local planning

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with an emphasis on multifunctional use and high density development. The preservation and restoration of viable neighborhoods requires limiting the growth of chains, malls, low density housing developments and their traffic-producing super-highways, etc. According to Siegel's vision, the older "street-car suburbs" of the 1920s and 1930s are much more desirable communities than modern suburbs that waste land, isolate individuals and families, promote consumerism, centralization and dependency. Modern living spaces are designed primarily by technocrats. People become passive spectators rather than agents of their communal and regional destiny. The first step toward ending this state of affairs requires a political will to limit the growth of low density dwellings with accompanying high density traffic directed toward specialized low density shopping malls with huge parking lots and impersonal chain stores.

To reverse the well-documented socially-destructive effects of urban and suburban planning requires that communities pass zoning and traffic ordinances that promote the local economy. Zoning for mixed-use development and the placing of severe restrictions on lot sizes made available for commercial developers are necessary to maintain high density living areas. As for traffic problems, Siegel suggests that speed limits, resistance to the continued development of superhighways (especially those that bypass towns or villages or viable urban community centers), an increased use of public transportation — including revitalized commuter railway services — will help check the erosion of local neighborhoods and small towns. At any rate, many of these proposals have already been successfully enacted in European countries such as Switzerland and would not entail a major departure from current practices. This, however, also happens to be one of the main problems Siegel does not discuss: Who will enact, enforce and coordinate all these regulations? How much of it can actually be carried out by local communities? What lurks in the horizon of this preservationist landscape is none other than the modern central state, with all those bureaucrats and technocrats Siegel otherwise despises. Without clearly specifying an alternative political framework to the existing central state, preservationism ends up redeploying a new version of the same infamous system they originally sought to replace

What Siegel envisions is the reconstruction of what looks suspiciously like 19th century America. Such a vision may be viable within certain regions and ethnic urban settings where there is still enough sense of tradition and communal continuity to make it work. Without considerably more decentralization of political power and without greater local autonomy, however, such proposals are meaningless. One of the major weaknesses of *The Preservationist Manifesto* is that it altogether ignores *concrete* politics and alternatives such as, e.g., the reconstitution of a viable federalism. Here, Siegel betrays his leftist environmentalist roots in terms of what he addresses and what he ignores in defining preservationism as politics transcending traditional 'Left' and 'Right' divisions.

The last several decades of urban reconstruction and suburban sprawl point to

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the need to reconstitute communities and reverse the family disintegration it has encouraged in favor of new haphazard, transitory aggregations of narcissistic individuals perfectly suited for the life of passive consumption.[5] To reverse the trend toward the weakening of character and thus the weakening of democratic community life, preservationist politics, along with most conservative critics, sees the family as the primary locus for socialization and character formation. Thus preservationists reject "progressivist" projects that undermine family functioning resulting in the replacement of the immediate organic character of familial existence by bureaucratic agencies such as public schools, social services, day care, television and shopping malls. Ultimately, the goal of progressivism is not the development of autonomous individuals able to sustain democratic institutions through participation and commitment, but merely to ease individuals into the work place and ultimately into the market place. Thus it does not matter if functions once carried out by the family and the local community are replaced by technocratic public institutions allegedly better able to deal with problems such as delinquency, truancy, illiteracy, alcoholism, drug abuse, etc., which assume socialization to take place mechanically and spontaneously. Preservationists, on the other hand, see these programs as contributing factors to the development of precisely the same social pathologies they are meant to cure. This conclusion is increasingly supported even by the studies of those social scientists which are the main culprits responsible for this process of social disintegration.

To help preserve the traditional family, Siegel advocates the privatization and decentralization of schools away from the educational bureaucracy and back to community and family control. To empower parents and involve them directly in the type and the quality of education given their children, he endorses a qualified deployment of the voucher system. This may encourage variety and specificity and would make education once again part of the community identity by removing it from the hands of "experts," ideologues, professionals, and technocrats. It is unclear, however, whether the voucher system will be able to do all this. To the extent that it would still finance it, the state would also control it much more than some peculiar communities may wish i.e., those wanting to have school teach religion, creationism, etc., i.e., subjects "politically incorrect" from the viewpoint of a self-righteous liberal establishment. Siegel himself cautions against the possible dangers of privatization: public schools may very well end up replaced by chains operating as the pedagogical equivalent of McDonalds or Pizza Huts. In any case, his point is that schooling is not only failing, but the the increased funding requested by the existing educational apparatus may make things worse rather than better.

Since most education today is no longer carried out either by the family or

5. This is the main thesis of Christopher Lasch's work in the early 1970s, which Siegel seems to be familiar with, unlike more recent works dealing with populist alternatives. See Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism* (New York: Norton, 1979).

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the schools but, rather by the omnipresent mass media, Siegel goes into considerable detail in trying to persuade parents to rigorously monitor television and whatever else their offspring are exposed to. TV dulls the young and indoctrinates them into the culture of consumerism. If familial influence, intimacy and authority are to be preserved, TV cannot be allowed to dominate household culture. Yet, it is improbable that these types of suggestions will have anything more than marginal impact for the foreseeable future. The social uses of TV are dramatically expanding. Not only is it increasingly becoming a major source of entertainment but, through satellites, cable and telephone systems it is rapidly turning into *the* most important mode of communication. What Siegel and preservationists need to address is not the old conundrum that TV is detrimental to living culture — the standard perspective of older generations of literati — but how to select and handle the unprecedented amount of "information" increasingly available in the age of cyberspace and virtual reality. It is no longer a matter of, e.g., the old opposition of reading vs. television, or TV vs. family fun. Like death and taxes, TV and the micro-computer are here to stay. Thus the point is not to try to go back to a pre-electronic era, but how to use the new tools for less frivolous ends. Although the manifesto does not have much to say about this, it is not really inconsistent with its general spirit since its key theme has to do with political control of technology. The problem, once again, has to do with the quality of communities and the people that will develop within them. Pathological individuals in weak communities will probably find ways to indulge in child pornography, computerized cretinism and other useless or destructive activities no matter how much control is deployed to prevent them. It is unlikely, however, that strong communities with intact organic families will devote much of their time watching the kind of junk currently polluting the air-waves or simply playing computer games (presently the primary use of the expansive computer systems made available in all educational institutions).

Occasionally, the manifesto tends to slide into the sophomoric. It has far too much of an anti-technological bias reminiscent of the 1960's cultural Left. Its almost religious call for a return to voluntary simplicity is surprisingly similar to that of another, more famous recent manifesto rooted in the same general cultural mileau: the Unabomber's. Unfortunately, returning to pre-modernity is not an a viable option. Of course, counterexamples abound. Communities such as the Amish have resisted the seductions of modernity for over 200 years. This resistance, however, is based on a unique configuration of of historical circumstances and an exceptionally strong religious tradition. It would make little sense to advocate such practices, which are contrary to the lifestyle of most people today. The Western world has not only become terminally addicted to the electronic media, but is not even willing to admit that it is a problem. Of course, on a personal level it may make sense to discuss

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limiting or monitoring the media or investing in various censorial chips. But this is not really a matter of public policy. This aspect of Siegel's work betrays a certain amount of philosophical naiveté. He tries to universalize what, at best, can only be particular choices. It is not enough to *assume* the obsolescence of modernity. It is necessary to be more specific about the constitution of the post-modern and post-industrial framework necessary for his political project.

With regard to work and production, Siegel challenges what he sees as a false and pernicious ideology: the equation of an expanding GNP with economic health. He points out that there were times during this century when communities functioned without mishap or hardship within a context of zero or minimal growth. The equation of growth and economic health keeps today's politics locked into the cycle of economic expansion as a means to create jobs, and work as a means to satisfy with consumer goods the ever expanding needs created by a surprisingly sophisticated culture industry. This in turn leads to ever new forms of dependency on managers and experts whose responsibility is to create jobs and oversee a work force that spends more and more time on the job at the expense of family, community, leisure and, most importantly, political participation. This bargain is struck in order to reap the meager rewards of a consumerism laced with anxieties about job and financial security.

Siegel is at his best when he exposes all this as a trap that increasingly threatens family and community life while reinforcing dependency and passivity. The alternative he proposes, however, needs more work. Clearly there is a strong connection between the culture of consumption, the politics of dependency and the economics of growth. But, contrary to Siegel, work and leisure are not necessarily mutually exclusive. He remains a prisoner of GNP thinking insofar as he can only pose the problem in terms of growth or non-growth, work or leisure. Today's economy is far more complex as it shifts from large scale, planned and highly centralized production to decentralized just-in-time functions performed by a multiplicity of dispersed small enterprises, subcontractors and specialized producers. This state of affairs allows much more time for home and community matters and a greater interaction of economic and community functions. While it may be unfair to expect a manifesto to provide a political history and a detailed account of the changing technological conditions of the postmodern world, this is no excuse for posing the problem of the society of the future as Siegel does: precisely in terms of that same modernist framework he decries in the first part of his book.

Despite the fact that Siegel tries to distinguish his politics from those of the anti-technology movements of the 1960s and 1970s, his various insights into the failings of progressive thinking and the unacknowledged recycling of certain conservative and populist ideas, his work remains too closely tied to the counter-cultural Left's romantic view of voluntary simplicity. As such, he falls prey to the Old Left's occupational hazard of providing another "Masterplan" — even

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if it is one proposing to dismantle all other masterplans. Without any attempt to vindicate *real* community specificity, his communities look like so may 19th century abstract utopias, all stamped out of the same cookie-cutter.[6] Lacking any concept of federalism,[7] Siegel has no meaningful critique of today's centralized *state — which condemns the Preservationist Masterplan to degenerate into another* garden-variety technocratic ploy to be imposed, not by faceless Washington bureaucrats, but by the functional equivalents of postmodern Franciscan monks. It is well-known, however, that history never repeats itself. Thus, the new Franciscan monks are not likely to degenerate, as their pious forerunners, into those ferocious Dominicans who a few centuries later carried out the Spanish Inquisition.

Alex Delfini

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6. In this, Siegel is in step with the Left. Historically committed to centralization and rationalization, the Left has been traditionally suspicious of any politics seeking to vindicate real *particularity* and *difference*. Even after it bought into the identity politics of multiculturalism in the 1970s and 1980s, it always regarded differences such as race, gender and class as ultimately not really all that important. For a critique of how multiculturalism degrades real differences into quasi-pathologies, see Russell Berman, "Beyond Localism and Universalism: Nationhood and Solidarity," in this issue of *Telos*.

7. For a series of systematic analyses of federalism as the institutional presupposition for a viable project of political decentralization, see the Special issue "On Federalism," *Telos* 91 (Spring 1992).

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Race and Social Science

Stephen Steinberg, *Turning Back: The Retreat from Racial Justice in American Thought and Policy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 276 pp. + xi. $25.00.

Todd Gitlin, *The Twilight of Common Dreams: Why America is Wracked by Culture Wars* (New York: Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Company, 1995), 294 pp. + x, $25.00.

Dinesh D'Souza, *The End of Racism: Principles for a Multiracial Society* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 724 pp. + xii. $30.00.

In 1955 I took part in Pelican Boys' State, an annual gathering of high school students aimed at promoting understanding of government sponsored by the American Legion. McCarthyism was still rife and indeed growing in the South following the Supreme Court's 1954 decision on school desegregation. In our simulated state government, I was elected to the Pelican Boys' State Senate, and for our final meeting, to be conducted in the Louisiana State Senate Chamber in Baton Rouge, we were asked to debate before the public and press some legislation we might propose. I introduced a measure: that Louisiana desegregate its public schools. The American Legionnaires, not members of the most liberal organization at that time, informally urged that we should instead debate a measure to require ROTC in all high schools. However, despite opposition, the Senate voted to debate my proposal. A few days later, during that featured public session in the Senate Chamber of a Southern state in 1955, we did debate desegregation. Surprisingly, there was so much support for my measure that the Legionnaires closed the Senate session before we had an opportunity to vote.

At that time I used one of the arguments on behalf of integration I had read about in a small booklet issued by the Southern Conference Education Fund (often deemed by its opponents to be a Communist front). The point was simply that whites had nothing to fear from school integration; after all, look at how well it was working in Washington, DC. By 1993, even President Bill Clinton (another veteran of Boys' State as well as Boys' Nation), who had been elected with considerable support from the National Education Association and most civil rights groups, chose not to send his daughter to Washington's public schools. Had integration worked in DC? Or had segregationist warnings been vindicated?

Eight years after my bout in Baton Rouge, I was teaching 5th grade (children 10 to 14 years old) in a large private school in New Orleans. Like almost all schools

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in the city at the time, it was segregated. During midday, another 5th grade teacher called me to her room where she was supervising a lunch-break with her pupils. One boy had brought a transistor radio and she urged me to listen. We cocked our heads to hear above the electrical interference and the din of the rest of the class at play. Shaken by what I heard, I returned to my class and announced: "The radio has just reported that President Kennedy has been shot in Dallas." The kids immediately cheered and applauded. I was doubly stunned. True, one girl cried, but she was the lone exception. In white schools throughout the South the news of Kennedy's shooting was greeted with similar rejoicing. It was only hours later, when the alleged culprit was exposed as a leftist, that white Southerners began to display remorse — "Isn't it awful what that communist did?" The earlier cheering disappeared from the media as did reports of bullets hitting Kennedy from the front. In 1963, the cleavage between the white South and the North was enormous.

In the early 1980s, working for the State of New York, I was returning from lunch when my supervisor passed me in the hall. She was an American citizen, a black woman born in Jamaica. She said to me, "Go see what they did to *your* president." Immediately, I wondered what might have happened to the CEO of the board of our government agency. In the office colleagues had gathered round a small television, one frequently brought in by the clerks who enjoyed watching soaps while they filed. That day, it was not tuned to "All My Children," but to the news. Someone had just shot President Reagan. The blacks in the office were jovial; some began to dance. Their glee was evident, for it was possible that Reagan would not survive the attack. Perhaps, I had arrived too late to observe cheers and applause. Some of us whites, the minority at the state agency, stood in the background, stunned by the reaction of our black co-workers. The chasm between black and white was clear to some of us in March 1981. By 1995, it was clear to all.

The New Era

The Million Man March opens a new era in American race relations — the era of Farrakhan. The era of abolitionist militancy, the Civil War, and Radical Reconstruction were associated mostly with Frederick Douglass, but that era closed with the beginning of this century. The change was evident when Booker T. Washington delivered his famous oration at the 1895 Atlanta Exhibition in which he contended that the races could remain separate on social issues. The following year the US Supreme Court endorsed legal segregation in its *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision. Then in 1900 free elections were thwarted by violence resulting in the defeat of Republican Rep. George H. White of North Carolina, the last black to serve in Congress for a quarter of a century. Douglass' death, Booker T. Washington's influential machine, the court's acceptance of enforced segregation, the purging of blacks from voting rolls, all revealed that Radical Reconstruction was dead. Booker T. Washington dominated the next two decades of accommodationist race relations in the US, but his era closed with his death and

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the changed conditions and migrations of WWI. Then, to the syncopations of jazz, "the New Negro" flourished in Harlem and other cities in the 1920s. Meanwhile, W. E. B. Du Bois and the NAACP, the Urban League, and other civil rights organizations vied for support against Marcus Garvey and his black nationalists in the Universal Negro Improvement Association.

By the 1930s, the New Negro was old hat and unemployed, much more so than the rest of the nation suffering through the Great Depression. But New Deal government spending, some trade unions, communist and radical organizations provided new outlets for hope, employment and protest. Following WWII, an emergent civil rights movement was nipped in the bud and persecuted during Truman-McCarthyism (far more by the former than by the latter). The Southern Negro Youth Congress, the Southern Conference on Human Welfare, the Civil Rights Congress, the Council on African Affairs and the Young Progressive Association were destroyed and Du Bois and Paul Robeson were marginalized. Truman even had the elderly Du Bois arrested as a foreign agent. Consequently, that early post-WWII wave of civil rights protest was smashed by Truman's liberals.

In the mid-1950s the Civil Rights Era began under the leadership of a black preacher in support of a black seamstress involved in a bus protest in Montgomery, Alabama. It was hard to label a black Christian minister a Communist, though a white, Jewish, and former (and perhaps lingering, secret) Communist would be one of Martin Luther King Jr.'s major advisors. The bus boycott was won. At the same time, the Supreme Court unanimously declared "separate but equal" segregation unconstitutional, and schools slowly began to integrate, even with the aid of federal troops. In 1960, sit-ins spawned renewed protests, and in 1964 the movement targeted the most racist state in the nation, Mississippi. That summer, Chaney, Schwerner, and Goodman were killed, symbolizing the spirit of sacrifice of the new movement: black and white, Northerners and Southerners, Christians and Jews. In 1963, the movement sponsored the quarter million civil rights march on Washington at which King delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech. In 1964, the Civil Rights Act passed, followed by the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

But in the mid-1960s, the interracial movement that had successfully achieved legislative change collapsed before the demands of Black Power. The most militant of the early 1960s organizations, SNCC and CORE, abandoned interracialism and non-violence, causing SNCC even to change the "N" word in its title, from Non-violent to National. But the new theatrics of SNCC and CORE were upstaged by the *ad hoc* Black Student Unions, California's Black Panther Party, and impromptu threats; street theater soon intersected with street violence; rioters set streets and ghettos aflame.

Meanwhile, with the election of Richard Nixon as President in 1968, deception reached Orwellian heights. While Nixon's Southern Strategy won many white Southern votes, it also earned him denunciations of "racism" from liberal Democrats. Meanwhile, Nixon's policies quietly scrapped the 1964 Civil Rights Act,

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destroyed equal opportunity policies, and replaced them with the quota policy of affirmative action and preferences still in effect today. "Disparate impact" theory was used to annul qualifications for jobs, allow drug addicts to terrorize public housing residents, hoodlums to destroy school discipline, and murderers to avoid execution. The crime rate soared during the administration of a Republican President whose slogan had been "Law and Order." Nixon also extended quota-affirmative action programs to women, Native Americans (as if people born here are not native Americans), Asians, and Hispanics. With Johnson's revised law of open immigration, the result was blacks born in Third World countries had preferences over native American whites for jobs, promotions, and admission to universities.

Though these policies were just the opposite of equal opportunity, as well as of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the civil rights lobby dared not call itself by its new proper name — the quota-, racial-, ethnic- and gender-preference lobby. They continually spoke of equal opportunity and civil rights, but demanded the end of equal opportunity and the denial of civil rights for white men. The EEOC pretended that the poorest white male was "privileged," so preferences had to be granted to the children of Bill Cosby and the daughters of millionaires. As unpopular as these quota-affirmative action policies were, they continued and expanded under every administration afterwards, culminating with Bush signing the pro-quota 1991 Civil Rights Act. Before Farrakhan's march, the oldest and most respected civil rights organization, the NAACP, chose black nationalist Ben Chavis as its leader. Were it not for a scandal over hush money for alleged sexual harassment, he might still head the NAACP. The civil rights era ended in 1969 with Nixon's inauguration. But the rhetoric, nostalgia, and culture of the civil rights era continued to provide legitimacy and cover for the liberal, tribal, preferential policies that replaced civil rights.

Despite quotas and preferences, the expanded welfare state of the War on Poverty, head start, food stamps, apartments for unwed mothers, Medicare, inner-city job fairs, minority set-asides, etc., more black women have children without husbands than ever, and more black men engage in crime than ever. By 1990, anti-black racism had shriveled, real poverty diminished, yet black crime was much higher than in the Great Depression — when there was real poverty and real anti-black bigotry. Not only has liberalism failed to solve the problem; liberalism *is* the problem. Its philosophy simply encourages more blacks to do the inexcusable. Thus, since the late 1960s in the US there have been 500,000 murders, and fewer than 400 executions. Some convicted murderers have been released after serving truncated sentences only to kill again. And if many blacks turn toward crime (blacks, 13% of the nation's population, are responsible for half the murders), it may be because they are aware that they will not be punished severely — if at all. By 1995, one third of all black males 20 to 29 were in prison, on probation or parole.

Consider the ghetto portrayed in "Boyz N the Hood," the 1991 film by black director John Singleton about blacks in Los Angeles. The only problem in that Los Angeles ghetto of single unit homes with driveways, cars, palm trees was the

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neighbors, many of whom turned to drugs and crime because they could get away with it. Tell the rest of the world about the "poverty" of those blacks in Los Angeles. Only a liberal can believe the nonsense that America is overwhelmingly infected with racism. Only a black nationalist can assert such nonsense with appropriate threatening scowl as to demand its acceptance (or else!). So the media and academia report and repeat the nonsense that America is a land of racism and too many, black and white, accept it as fact.

Of course, there *is* racism in America. Most of this racism, however, is anti-white. Not only is the only legal, institutionalized racism that of the EEOC, openly anti-white (and anti-male), but anti-white racism infects other institutions. It is no accident that the National Endowment for the Humanities-sponsored "History Standards for Goals 2000" praise every colored leader mentioned, no matter how barbarous and murderous, while blithely de-emphasizing the contribution of white men. But the academic elite, like their media and philanthropic cohorts, despise Western civilization. Thus Yale University, with a $20 million grant, refused to expand its course in Western Civilization. To the elite, the West is the enemy, to be undermined, while every non-white culture of a dozen people is praised, no matter how illiterate, primitive, or savage. The West is the target, and America, the strongest nation of the West, has long been the largest target of the Left.

To the extent that Farrakhan is an enemy of the West, the media, academia, and other liberal elites treat him with kid gloves. Note the media's coverage of Farrakhan's march. Many stressed that Americans should separate the message from the messenger, that the massive march was about black men atoning for past sins and showing determination to take responsibility for their lives and their families in the future. Some stories praised the polite crowd, which was devoid of drugs, alcohol, and violence. Media polls contended that most of the marchers were middle-class blacks, and that only 5% stated they were followers of Farrakhan. Other follow-up, human interest stories of participants stressed the enthusiasm, warm-feelings, and fraternal affections among the "brothers." Liberal outlets did permit muted criticism from feminists, who bemoaned the absence of women, but their main complaint was that women should have been full participants in the march. Disputes about the number of participants made headlines, as the official Park Service count of 400,000 varied from an ABC consulting firms' guess of 850,000, while march leaders estimated from 1 to 2 and a half million.

Much of this coverage missed the point. True, days before the march Reuters released an interview with Farrakhan in which he called Jews "bloodsuckers" of the black community. Farrakhan then added a similar swipe at Korean, Arab, and other store owners in ghetto neighborhoods. But even when acknowledging Farrakhan's "irrational" comments, liberals' annoyance was overwhelmed by their awe when they reckoned the size of the massive march: a minimum of 400,000 participants, at which Maya Angelou, Jesse Jackson and Democratic members of the Black Congressional Caucus were mere warm-up speakers for Farrakhan's

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main event. The message of Rosa Parks and civil rights were mere prelude, mere history, to the present and future, to the man who had mobilized the march. Another civil rights activist, who had been with the SCLC and ordained in King's church, Al Samson, formally moved a resolution before the assembled black men — that Minister Farrakhan be acknowledged as the leader of all African Americans. The crowd roared its approval. The torch had passed.

By the 1960s the Nation of Islam was the main black nationalist organization in the US. It so despised whites, it viewed them as devils. The NOI opposed the civil rights movement and the 1963 civil rights march on Washington. Malcolm X travelled to Washington that day, not to speak of unity, not to march, but to denounce the "farce on Washington." In the early 1960s, and still a member of the NOI, Malcolm travelled to the South, not to partake in civil rights protest but to make secret deals with the Klan. Furthermore, at a major NOI gathering in the Chicago International Amphitheater in February 1962, Elijah Mohammed had George Lincoln Rockwell, leader of the American Nazi party, address 12,000 of his Black Muslim followers.

The Million Man march is a watershed event. Hundreds of thousands of black men voted with their feet to endorse Farrakhan as their leader. There were many flags at the march, almost all black, red, and green. There were hardly any American flags When Libya's dictator Moammar Gadhafi made an interest-free loan to Farrakhan in 1985 of $5 million, he was making a shrewd investment in anti-Americanism. In January 1996, Gadhafi promised Farrakhan $1 billion. According to the Libyan news service, Gadhafi stated that: "Our confrontation with America is like a fight against a fortress from the outside, and today we found a breach to enter into this fortress and confront it." The service also reported that Gadhafi "called for creation of a separate black state in the US with its own army manned by black soldiers from the US armed forces."[1]

On Saturday night, October 14, at a meeting at McKinley Tech High School, the Nation of Islam's Youth Minister, Quanell X, told an enthusiastic crowd: "All the Jews can go straight to hell." Earlier he told a reporter: "The real deal is this . . . I say to Jewish America: Get ready . . . knuckle up, put your boots on, because we're ready and the war is going down." Just before Steve Cokely, a former aide to the mayor of Chicago, was to begin his lecture, "The Jewish Conspiracy," NOI Minister Khallid Muhammad, attacked President Clinton as a "cracker" for leaving town when "God's man" was about to arrive. Khallid added: "This is the time of the black man's rise and the white man's demise." He then demanded that the only white in the public school auditorium be ejected, threatening to turn the lights out and "boot your ass out." The white was shoved out of the public hall.[2] At another rally, on Sunday night, Malik Zulu Shabazz, a law student at Howard University and a leader of Unity Nation, asserted: "I have a hit list, right here in

1. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (Jan. 27, 1996).
2. *The Chicago Tribune* (Oct. 16, 1995).

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my pocket," of black, Christian ministers. Khallid, probably angered that O. J. would not march after having walked, denounced the athlete for leaving his black wife for that white whore Nicole and that other white whore, Nicole's sister.

On the day of the march, Moshe Maoz and Ronn Torossian, along with other Jews, attempted to protest. The marchers surrounded the protestors, spat on them, taunted them, and shouted, "Hitler should have finished you off." Federal and city government officials responded as expected. "Instead of protecting us from the hostility of the crowd and guaranteeing our First Amendment right to speak out, Park Police lieutenants ripped signs from our hands and ordered us to leave the area because we were 'inciting a riot'."[3] The *New York Post* reported that many of the nearly all-white state militia movements approved of much of what Farrakhan said. The *New York Times* ran a report on similarities between today's NOI policies of the NOI and those of the KKK and other white supremacist groups. The Democrats have not only subsidized the NOI through public housing contracts with NOI front groups, they have indulged the racism of the NOI in public schools and now in the capital.

The O.J. Verdict

The O. J. verdict proves again that in today's liberal America, blacks get away with murder. In Los Angeles an affirmative-action jury rendered an affirmative-action verdict. This is no exception. When David Dinkins was mayor of New York City in 1991, blacks rioted in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, shouting, "Kill the Jews." As almost all whites in the area are Jews, anti-Semitism merged with anti-white racism. Rabbinical student Yankel Rosenbaum was knifed. Before he died, he pointed out Lemerick Nelson, a 16-year-old black, as the one who had stabbed him. But another affirmative-action jury not only acquitted Nelson, the jurors attended the defendant's victory celebration.

In 1990 Jewish Defense League founder Meir Kahane was shot at a public gathering in Dinkins' New York. Spectators identified the murderer, El Sayyid Nosair, a third-world immigrant. But the jury found Nosair guilty only of carrying a weapon, not of killing Kahane! More recently, during the testimony at the trial of the terrorists involved in the World Trade Center bombing, Nosair was identified and convicted as one of the general conspirators. Yet he has never been convicted for the murder of Kahane.

In Baltimore in 1995 Davon Neverdon, a black, was acquitted by another all-minority, nearly all black jury, even though four eyewitnesses testified that he had slain a white man while attempting a robbery. Following the Rodney King verdicts, many blacks in Los Angeles rioted, beating and robbing whites, Hispanics, and Asians. Reginald Denny, a white male, drove his truck into a black neighborhood. Black rioters disabled his truck, beat him to the ground, and one

3. *The New York Times*, letters (Oct. 20, 1995).

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young black, Lance Parker, danced while slamming a brick into the head of the downed Denny. Parker was found not guilty of attempted murder, and was sentenced to three years' probation.

Attorney Johnnie Cochran did not introduce racism into the O.J. trial, even when he was escorted by guards from the openly racist Nation of Islam. Nor did Lt. Mark Fuhrman. Racism was introduced into all the courtrooms of the land by Supreme Court decisions that require double standards in challenging minority (and female) potential jurors. The Los Angeles DA did not even ask for the death penalty for O. J., though he was accused of brutally killing two people. The population of Los Angeles is 14% black, but liberal politicians conspired to produce a jury 75% black. It was a stacked jury, and probably could have voted "not guilty" in the first three hours of trial a year before and saved the taxpayers a bundle. The question of double standards for blacks to increase their number on juries is as unjust as other forms of affirmative action. It is institutionalized racism.

Steinberg's Turning

The dust jacket of Stephen Steinberg's book is filled with glowing praise from leftist scholars — Roger Wilkins, Frances Fox Piven, Michael Eric Dyson, Howard Zinn, Derrick Bell, Mary Frances Berry — and rightly so, for Steinberg presents the Left's view of sociology and race relations. He explains how social scientists have accepted and rejected various "paradigms," or theoretical models for understanding the race issue in America. Early in this century, most social scientists explained the gaps between blacks and whites in income, education, status, employment, etc. as due to the assumed genetic inferiority of blacks. By the 1930s, that paradigm was being increasingly challenged. Some American social scientists were suddenly embarrassed by the similarity of their views and those of Nazi social scientists who explained the world in terms of the hierarchy of races. Worse, racial conflicts might occur in America, as evidenced by the 1935 Harlem riots.

Fear of racial clashes and unease with the then dominant paradigm led the Carnegie Foundation to sponsor a new, massive study on race in America. Led by Gunnar Myrdal, an outsider with links neither to the Dixiecrat Right nor the Abolitionist Left, his aim was to gather facts and let them speak for themselves. He hired numerous academics, friends and potential foes, to contribute to the project. The result was *An American Dilemma*, which established a new paradigm on race with its publication during WWII. The problem with Myrdal's work was not the facts but the interpretation. To Myrdal, white racism and black inferiority (the product of inferior conditions) played upon each other. To break the cycle, whites and blacks must attempt to know each other. The American moral dilemma (a democratic creed often vitiated by racism) could thereby become America's great opportunity. Education and improved economic conditions would lessen prejudice, so America could live up to its democratic faith and overcome racial prejudice.

It was not new theories that were to overturn Myrdal's paradigm, but civil

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rights demonstrations in the 1960s. A new paradigm — confrontation — evolved and has remained dominant since. It saw Afro-Americans more like a caste than a class, more like an oppressed colonial people than fellow citizens, more like a people with a distinct culture than as Americans with black skins. Moreover, civil rights laws guaranteeing equal opportunity were inadequate; equal results were demanded. Preferences for blacks were therefore essential to overcome institutional racism and insure that blacks would have an equal chance on an equal playing field. Myrdal's moral dilemma of the oppressor was dismissed as irrelevant individual prejudice. The key to understand America was "institutional racism," from which all whites benefited and of which, therefore, all whites were guilty. Consequently, race preferences, racial set-asides, and other affirmative action programs were the only fair method to compensate for past oppression and the present invisible institutional racism. If civil rights laws promoted freedom, affirmative action sought equality.

Unlike other social scientists, Steinberg argues that affirmative action has had a major impact on the American labor market, ending the racial apartheid prevalent until the 1960s. He not only favors its continuation but also its expansion. Also, Steinberg sees a correlation between the economic advancement of Afro-Americans and restrictions on immigration. He argues that the 1960s immigration laws, which culminating in massive immigration, both legal and illegal, along with the corporate relocation of many industries to foreign nations, have reduced the potential for black economic advancement. Steinberg acknowledges that many large corporations support affirmative action, and he gives some credit (though less than is due) to the Nixon Administration for institutionalizing affirmative action. The problem with Steinberg's approach is not only the "scholarship of backlash," but its failure to explain a) the racially antagonistic reactions to the O. J. verdict, and b) the massive Million Man March and the rise of Farrakhan.

To Left sociologists, blacks are an internal colony, oppressed by white (and, more recently, other) Americans. As Steinberg writes: "If ghettoes constituted a kind of colony, then . . . riots were actually a form of 'revolt,'. . . Liberation meant more than securing civil rights. It also meant taking control of one's community" (88). This has been the dominant paradigm for three decades. It legitimates Farrakhan's attacks on community "bloodsuckers," black protestors' denunciations of "alien" Korean store owners and Harlem picketers claiming that "This block for niggers only, no whites and Jews allowed."[4] Some blacks demand that Jewish, Korean, and Arab businesses "return something to the community," beyond paying taxes and providing various services. What if a black sought to open a store in a white neighborhood, and a gang of whites threatened him unless he "returned something to the community"? Those gang leaders would be arrested as extortionists, racists and thugs. But when black extortionists,

4. *The New York Times* (December 12, 1995).

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racists, and thugs make the same demands on Jewish, Korean, and other white owners, they are often encouraged by liberal academic theorists.

Roland Smith, who torched Freddy's in Harlem and killed seven people, like Colin Ferguson, the black who killed whites and Asians on the Long Island Railroad, like the picketers of the Korean stores in Brooklyn, like the mob in Crown Heights, and others, are *not* valiant colonials expelling (or killing) foreign exploiters from "their" communities. They are *racists* who demand pay-offs and preferences for their gang. Social science has misled America for three decades. Blacks are not a colony: they are Americans and, like everyone else, they can be racists.

Gitlin's Twilight

A former president of Students for a Democratic Society in the 1960s, Todd Gitlin has written a perceptive history of that decade. Unfortunately, his new book is shallow, evasive and contradictory. Gitlin complains that since the late 1960s, while the Left has seized university English departments, the Republicans have usually occupied the White House. From 1973 to 1994 real wages have declined by 18.8%, the economic gaps widened between rich and poor, black and white, yet voters elected a Republican Congress in 1994. According to Gitlin, the cause of the Left's defeats is identity politics. He traces this to the 1960s, when the civil rights movement, with its American flags, black and white together and universal dreams, were swept aside by the explosive growth of Black Nationalism and Black Power. Whites were expelled from SNCC and CORE.[5] Some then formed their own identity groups — the women's movement, gay liberation, various ethnic

5. It is interesting to note how Gitlin's "scholarship" changes to support his altered political position. In *Twilight* he writes: "Among black activists, the thrust was toward the spirit of go-it-alone. The militants of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee felt betrayed by mainstream liberals, lost interest in alliances with whites, and ended up expelling even radical white organizers" (130). The nearest footnote refers to "Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam, 1987), pp. 151-62." In those pages, however, Gitlin *justified* the purge of whites from SNCC. He divided SNCC workers into "floaters" (those more concerned with consciousness raising, general philosophy, and changing the whole individual) and practical members concerned with organizing people around immediate projects. Gitlin regarded the purge of whites as simply a purge of impractical "floaters." I have already objected to Gitlin's and similar analyses, like Clayborne Carson's who implied that in SNCC black *radicals* expelled white *liberals* (see my "Change in the South," *Journal of Ethnic Studies*, Summer 1988, esp. pp. 124-30). For example, if the point was to expel floaters, then Bob Moses and other blacks would also have been purged. But neither black floaters nor black liberals were expelled, while practical white radicals like Bob and Dottie Zellner were unceremoniously kicked out. Not only was the purge *racist*, it may have had McCarthyite overtones (see my discussion of the earlier expulsion of whites from New Orleans CORE in 1962 in my letter in *Society*, Jul.-Aug. 1995, pp. 10-11; and my "To Win These Rights" in *Virginia Quarterly Review*, Winter 1996, esp. p. 186). Having finally come to the realization that black nationalism may be problematic, in *Twilight* Gitlin finally concedes that white radicals were among those purged for being white.

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groups. They were joined by Hispanic, Asian American, Native American, and later disabled groups. Still, all that united the Left was its opposition to the war in Vietnam. When that war ended, the Left turned out to be merely a collection of special-interest, identity groups, often feuding with each other.

Gitlin's first chapter describes a bitter dispute in Oakland, California, in the late 1980s over adoption of a new series of multicultural text books. The main author, radical historian Gary Nash, is a multiculturalist, but that failed to sway nationalists from various ethnic studies departments of nearby San Francisco colleges. They attended school board meetings to denounce Nash and his work as racist, sexist, homophobic. They did not care that the books described Mexican soldiers as "brave," but failed to extend the courtesy to American volunteers equally worthy of the designation. The opponents did not seek compromise, for they were there to "mau mau" Nash. They "knew" that Jews had run the slave trade. Nash and the white radicals were jeered and defeated, as Oakland chose to reject many of the new history texts. Not until 150 pages later does Gitlin reveal that Nash also chaired the development of the history standards for Goals 2000. This multicultural hodgepodge was so hostile to American values, so one-sided in its praise of feminists and minorities, that the Senate, liberals and conservatives alike, voted 99-1 to reject those standards. If Nash's notions were so sympathetic to multiculturalism, why did the multiculturalists of Oakland reject them?

Here is the dilemma for Gitlin, Nash, and the Left. To the identity movement, people and their works are judged by race, gender, orientation. To various Black Nationalists, whites are devils; to some feminists, all men are rapists or latent rapists. Some feminists resent males who enroll in women's studies classes. To some black nationalists, whites should not teach blacks, much less develop a curriculum for young blacks. They judge not by an individual's character, but by the color of his or her skin. They rejected Nash's texts as they had earlier rejected King's 1963 color-blind appeal. Though Gitlin pretends to trace the identity movement back to the Enlightenment, he poignantly skips the Nazi era in Germany and dares not expose some of the racist roots of today's identity movements. His analysis is vitiated by a contradiction. While the Left once championed the common man, he has now been replaced by the Chicana, the gay, the disabled, the Native American. Today the Left considers the common man, like the common language, oppressive. Gitlin seeks to revive the common spirit, the common dream, the common man and woman.

However, it is often government that denies our commonness: determining our identity; labeling us Black, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, female. Our chances for college admission, job promotion, business contract, etc. depend more on "who" we are than what we know, how well we work, or how we might fulfill contracts. When Gitlin reports the enormous growth of Americans who now claim Native American heritage, the reason is clear to all except Gitlin: it is more profitable today to be a Native American than a native American. If much of America is mired in identity politics, it is precisely because government rewards

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and punishes according to those identities.

Gitlin's contradiction is that he supports government identity politics, affirmative action, set asides, goals and timetables. He justifies the University of California, Berkeley's notorious affirmative action programs by asserting that *only* 500 whites and Asians were denied admission annually because of their race. Would he have dismissed the issue if 500 blacks and Hispanics had been turned away because of their race? Gitlin wants it both ways. He deplores identity politics with its disunity and irrationality, yet demands that the government continue to judge its citizens not by what they know or do or have done, but by their race, sex, or heritage. He complains that the identity movement demonizes white men. Then he does the same thing, alleging that the poorest white teen is privileged and deserving of government discrimination to give preference, in principle, even to wealthy women and minorities. Gitlin seems bewildered that many white men reject the Left and refuse to vote for the Democrats. The *Twilight* he writes about is, first and foremost, that of today's Left.

D'Souza's End

On Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, 1996, PBS Television's "American Experience" telecast a two-hour documentary on civil rights activities in Mississippi in the 1960s, "Freedom on My Mind." It included old footage of a White Citizens' Council rally at which a segregationist denounced the proposed Civil Rights Act by declaring: "It'll give n-----s privileges white people don't have." Of course, respectable opinion at that time regarded as absurd the segregationists' fears that the pending civil rights legislation would favor blacks over whites. To expose such frivolous accusations Senator Hubert Humphrey, a sponsor of the 1964 bill, spoke in the Senate: "there is nothing in it [the bill] that will give any power to the Commission [EEOC] or to any court to require hiring, firing, or promotion of employees in order to meet a racial 'quota' or to achieve racial balance . . . In fact, the very opposite is true . . . Title VII is designed to encourage hiring on the basis of ability and qualifications, not race and religion."[6]

Dinesh D'Souza claims it was inevitable that the Civil Rights Act would provide preferences for blacks and discriminate against whites in order to establish proportional representation in the work place, university, and society (205-7). His argument is clear: those in the civil rights movement assumed that with the removal of overt discrimination and the enforcement of color-blind policies blacks would be able to compete and acquire a proportional share of jobs, promotions, university admissions, etc. However, passage of the 1964 act and the end of discrimination made it painfully obvious in the South, as had already been observed in the North, that blacks as a group were not competing successfully with whites in intellectual pursuits. Equal opportunity for individuals was not producing equal

6. Hugh Graham, *The Civil Rights Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 150.

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results by groups. So pressure mounted on various fronts. Capitulating to these pressures when he became President, Nixon changed the equation. The 1964 act was turned on its head. Henceforth, in hiring, promotion, university admissions, business contracts, equal results by groups were required or firms would lose government contracts and/or face heavy fines. To achieve such results, white men were routinely denied equal opportunity. Scanning the racial and gender proportions of employees, the EEOC judged corporations guilty of discrimination unless they could prove themselves innocent — a process that, even if the firm won in court, proved so costly that private firms, either on their own or in out-of-court settlements, resorted to quotas, goals, and timetables, i.e., to preferences for women and minorities — all at the expense of better qualified white men.

Was this *really* inevitable? Was this the logical outcome of the civil rights movement and the 1964 Civil Rights Act? That law was written to prevent intentional discrimination based on race, religion, or sex. As written, the law *explicitly* rejects disproportional numbers as proof. There has to be intent to discriminate, and that intent has to be proven. Unfortunately, the EEOC, established as part of the 1964 law, immediately attempted to subvert the law which had created it. D'Souza cavalierly writes that the EEOC quickly collected racial statistics from large corporations (205). What he fails to add is that this collection of statistics was prohibited by the law the EEOC was commissioned to enforce. The EEOC collected the racial statistics *illegally*. It then subverted the law so that statistics would be used to provide a *prima facie* case of discrimination against corporations when the EEOC judged the proportions of minorities or women too low. Intent to discriminate was dismissed as irrelevant; numbers made the case. Even job qualifications, such as a high school diploma or a crime-free record, were soon found discriminatory because of their disparate impact on blacks seeking employment. Ever more qualifications were abandoned for ever more jobs. Standards declined.

Such an outcome may have been *one* conclusion to the civil rights movement, but it was not the only possible one and certainly not *the* logical conclusion. Nor was it inevitable. In 1964 most liberals asserted such an outcome improbable if not absurd. In part, this absurd conclusion became policy because of a conspiracy. By 1971, disparate group impact or a disproportional number of a group working for a corporation was almost sufficient to clinch a case of "discrimination." To this day, there are headlines decrying racism because blacks are denied a proportional number of loans, or are arrested in excess of their percentage of the population. As white men are most of the CEO's of major corporations, this proves a "glass ceiling" of discrimination against women and racism against minorities.

However, one neglected aspect of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 should be reconsidered — religion. As Jews compose a disproportional number of students in medical schools, does this not prove discrimination against gentiles? Remember, *intent* to discriminate is no longer considered; the proof is in the numbers. If whites are guilty of racism against blacks, and men guilty of sexism against

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women, how much more are Jews guilty of discrimination against gentiles in medical schools, law schools, universities, the film industry, radio and television, National Public Radio? Why has the EEOC not filed discriminatory suits against *The New York Times*, NBC, and the AMA? Should not gentiles receive their "fair share," their proportion of posts, in these areas? What would happen if a Christian fundamentalist filed such a suit?

The reason the religious phrase in the Civil Rights Act is overlooked is because some of the EEOC bureaucrats most engaged in subverting the 1964 law and turning it into a legal requirement for proportional representation were adamant that such proportional representation should not apply to themselves! Neither social democrat Sonia Pressman nor Alfred Blumrosen, engineers of the coup inside the EEOC, wanted to call attention to the disproportional share of Jews in highly profitable fields.[7] So, while they conspired to overthrow the heart of the color-blind 1964 law and substitute instead their bean-counting, proportional approach, they made sure they never asked corporations or government agencies or law schools about the religious identities of their employees. For some reason, the media has never exposed this inconsistency in enforcement of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

Though D'Souza courageously breaks many taboos in his book, he generally evades raising the issue of religious proportionality. Worse, when it does surface, he distorts it. "Moreover, the enforcement of a proportional norm generates a paradoxical outcome. It ends up punishing groups, such as Asians, who are themselves in this country a minority . . . The reason that Asians and Jews suffer under current policies is that there is no algebraic way to increase the proportion of underrepresented groups without simultaneously reducing the proportion of overrepresented groups"(300). Of course, there *is* a way, and it has been the way since the EEOC conspirators developed it. While Asians are a separate category for affirmative action reports and, for example, government tracks their proportions in university admissions, Jews are *not* so classified. While Asians may therefore be restricted to university admissions approximate to their percentage in society, thereby greatly curtailing their opportunities, Jews do not encounter this restriction. Jews are classified by the government not as Jews, but simply as non-Hispanic whites. So Jews, some 2% of the population, have opportunity not for some 2%, but for 76% of the openings at law schools, medical schools, etc. D'Souza utterly distorts the issue of proportionality of Jews on the rare occasion he discusses it. On another page, he does refer to Jews having lucrative posts in excess of their proportion of the population, but that is when he is discussing the racist views of Black Nationalist Dr. Leonard Jeffries (417-18).

One important thread in D'Souza's account is his challenge to Gitlin's rather common view. By searching for the roots of racism, D'Souza uncovers a surprising family tree. He argues that the ancients, while holding their own culture and people

7. For details, see Graham, *op. cit.*, pp. 191, 195, 198, 236, 245-48.

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to be superior to others, were generally not racists. Thus the Greeks attributed the dark skins and differences of black cultures to the hotter climate where blacks lived. But centuries later, during the Age of Discovery, Europeans encountered many primitive peoples in Africa and the New World. When Europeans settled in hotter climates, they neither changed their colors nor descended into primitivism. Climate ceased to explain the gaps between European civilization and the primitive cultures they met. To better account for the gaps, learned Europeans developed the theory of racism — the notion that the abilities of various races are inherent in whatever clime. D'Souza quotes Voltaire and other Enlightenment thinkers on the natural inferiority of blacks. This view was elaborated by the best scientists of the time. In the 19th century, Darwin endorsed it, and by 1900 scientific, reasonable, and progressive opinion was overtly racist.

D'Souza also traces another theme — the role of Christianity in defending the rights of people of color. He discusses the Salamanca debates of 1550s in which Juan de Sepulveda argued that American Indians were to the Spanish as the woman to man, the child to the adult, the ape to man. Acknowledging their architecture, Sepulveda claimed that this did not prove the Indians' humanity; only that they were more akin to bees that constructed hives or ants that built nests. The missionary Bartolomeo de Las Cases disagreed, defending the human nature of Indians, who were thus deserving of basic human rights (354-55). (Ironically, as part of his policy to defend Indians, Las Casas urged the importation of African slaves.) D'Souza also stresses the role of Christian churches in the Abolitionist movement in the US and the West. Indeed, he maintains that abolition of slavery is one of the greatest achievements of the West (112). D'Souza sees no abolitionist impulse in non-Western societies. They not only permitted the institution of slavery, some took part in it, profiting by it, and some, like West African native chieftains, vigorously protested when the West sought to end the slave trade (105). Moreover, in the Middle East, the founder of Islam, Muhammad, was himself a slave owner. So D'Souza credits the West for achieving the abolition of slavery. Moreover, in the West it was neither the humanists, nor Enlightenment thinkers, Darwinians, or scientists, but religious Christians who led the crusades against slavery and racism.

Another contrast between Gitlin and D'Souza concerns Herbert Aptheker. Gitlin acknowledges how much New Left scholars owed to the Old, and he proceeds to name some (146). But he omits mention of Aptheker, whose pioneering writings on black history inspired numerous scholars and activists. Aptheker was a Communist, so the social democrat Gitlin purges his name. Neo-conservative D'Souza does mention Aptheker, but only to attack his dissertation, *American Negro Slave Revolts*. Along with many historians, D'Souza claims that few such revolts occurred (97). Even if a few did revolt, the considerable discussion in the Southern press of slave conspiracies and revolts, (over 250 compiled in Aptheker's work), if nothing else, proves the great fear of slave revolts. That fear *might* also reveal something about the institution of slavery. D'Souza also states

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that many slaves, rather than attempt a "proletarian" type revolution in a hopeless situation, such as he caricatures Aptheker's thesis, developed other means to sabotage the institution of slavery. However, in addition to describing revolts and fears of revolts, Aptheker described numerous other methods used by slaves to subvert the institution that oppressed them, and he did so long before some of the historians D'Souza does cite. (Steinberg also discusses Aptheker, but only as an early critic of Myrdal's *An American Dilemma*.)

When D'Souza discusses Franz Boas, he makes the same error he did in discussing the evolution of civil rights interpretation after 1964 — one conclusion is not necessarily the *only* one. While Boas was a proponent of cultural relativism, D'Souza uses this to jump to various conclusions. We cannot condemn drug use or the illegitimacy rate, the crime rate or the anti-intellectual attitudes among blacks, for to do so is to impose majority values on the minority culture. As each culture is beyond criticism, so is each individual. Cultural relativism culminates in moral relativism (155). A major flaw in D'Souza's interpretation concerns the culture of American blacks. That culture is American. Blacks do not carry laundry on their heads to wash it by pounding it against rocks beside a local stream; they carry it by hand in plastic containers to laundromats that operate with American coins. Few Afrocentrists are willing to forego their automobiles, televisions, or VCRs. They want the best of Western, technological civilization. To acquire it, they must be judged in its terms. Perhaps an outback aborigine tribe can avoid being judged on the technological scale, but not blacks who reside in the US and are ready to protest if the postman fails to deliver the welfare check on time. Boas' theory does not necessarily lead to the so-called cultural and moral relativism outlined by D'Souza. Furthermore, many of the multiculturalists and Afrocentrists are *not* cultural relativists: they do judge other cultures. They are anti-scientific, anti-technological and anti-rational. They condemn the West.

D'Souza states that white liberals have a difficult time acknowledging black racism (400). Unfortunately, so has he. How could a reasonable observer of American society, in the year of the Million Man March and the O. J. verdict, title a book *The End of Racism*? Furthermore, throughout his lengthy work D'Souza writes as if black racists do not exist, using the word "racist" to mean exclusively white racism. True, he does assert that blacks can be racists on page 23, but only after 400 pages does he finally *confirm* that blacks can be racists (400-29). He concludes that black and white racisms are now mirror image ideologies (429), but neglects to stress that such a mirror image distorts reality for the two are of vastly unequal strength. While the Million Man March and the Nation of Islam have friends in the Congressional Black Caucus, the Democratic Party, and financiers among foreign dictators, the Ku Klux Klan is, in D'Souza's own words, "a virtually defunct organization" (392).

D'Souza contends that there is a clear 'civilization' gap between blacks and whites in this country (527). Some of his most searing rhetoric exposes the black side of the gap — such as inner city ghettos irrigated with alcohol, urine, and

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blood (16). What causes the gap? To liberals, the 'root cause' of black pathologies is clear: white racism. By contrast, Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein in *The Bell Curve* are more apt to blame black chromosomes. Aware that white racism declined over the past decades while black pathologies soared, D'Souza dismisses white racism as the cause. However, he totally rejects biology as responsible for the differences between whites and blacks in intelligence, crime, or general pathologies (527). Nevertheless, he assembles clear support for genetic differences among the races in native athletic abilities. He points out that at the 1992 Olympics every gold medalist in track up to the 400 meter hurdles and again from the 800 meters through the marathon was awarded to blacks (437). These are hardly the proportional results from a level starting gate mandated by those who favor present civil rights policies. Furthermore, D'Souza acknowledges that these obvious racial differences in athletic performances cannot be addressed in the American media because it broaches on the taboo that there might also be intellectual differences between the races.

Though D'Souza has evoked the wrath of the Left, one purpose of his book is to dissuade Americans from accepting the position of the Right. He hopes to provide an alternative explanation for the civilization gap and for black failure. He explains the gap and those failures in terms of a maladaptive black culture. Nevertheless, he seems almost desperate, digging trenches in a stop-gap effort, trying to prevent thinking Americans from accepting the implications of *The Bell Curve*: "Could it be that Herrnstein and Murray were articulating truths that many whites privately believe? After all, the liberal insistence that the races are identical seems to conflict with common sense observation and must be accompanied by an elaborate rationale for why blacks are doing very poorly in America, for why black crime and illegitimacy rates are vastly higher than those of whites and Asians, for why the white nations of the world are the most prosperous, for why much of Asia and Latin America are expanding economically while most of Africa remains in a state of economic and political chaos. By contrast, Herrnstein and Murray's view appears to succeed by the logic of Occam's razor: a natural hierarchy of racial abilities would predict and fully account for such phenomena" (12). If Herrnstein and Murray are right, "the hope of a society in which all groups compete on equal terms is an illusion."(13)

D'Souza warns about "eugenics." Again, he jumps to one *improbable* outcome as if it were the most likely or inevitable one. It is the same logic so prominent in the 1950s: if America adds fluoride to its water supply the result will be socialized medicine followed by Stalinist gulags. Now, when the media report any possibility of racial differences in intelligence, they invariably invoke the horrors of the Holocaust. Only many pages after D'Souza raises the issue of eugenics, does he point out that if millions were murdered in the name of racial hierarchy by Hitler, millions more have been slaughtered in the name of equality by Stalin, Mao, and their admirers (464).

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The implications of *The Bell Curve* worry D'Souza: "If IQ differences between racial groups are inherited and are substantial, then . . . we have to ask the alarming questions: was the Southern racist position basically correct, and are some forms of segregation and discrimination justified?" (465). But this does not follow. *The Bell Curve* shows overlaps in IQ between and among races. The segregationists drew a line, all blacks on one side, all whites on the other. *The Bell Curve* presents a continuum. Its implications are simply not those D'Souza draws. If *The Bell Curve* is accurate and the races differ in intelligence as they do in athletics, then, for example, in school tracking systems, more whites would probably be in advanced classes, more blacks in slower ones. If that is attuned to the abilities of each child, that is how it should be. If only a small percentage of blacks were CEOs or philosophers, that may not necessarily be due to racial discrimination but to differences in natural abilities. Michael Levin has elaborated on some of these points arguing that, if one takes IQ scores seriously, blacks turn out to be overrepresented among philosophers, CEOs, etc.

But, what if Murray and Herrnstein are correct? Should their science be denied because D'Souza and the Left are disturbed by its possible social implications? Would D'Souza reject Galileo because his scientific observations raise "alarming questions"? D'Souza accuses liberals of submitting to ignorance and fear: ignorance of the cause of racism, i.e., the civilization gap, and fear that biology best explains that gap. But D'Souza seems to share the same fear — that biology may indeed be the cause of the civilization gap between black and white.

There is, however, a simpler solution. Whatever the IQs of groups, the government should treat individuals as individuals. In assignments to advanced or slower classes, color should count less than IQ. Affirmative action liberals would rig the results, but so do segregationists — one with proportional representation of the races in those classes, the other dividing them by race. But why not let the chips fall where they may? For most Americans *that* was the purpose of the civil rights movement, as well as the 1964 Civil Rights Act. If in America the law were applied to individuals rather than groups, "genetic" problems might well recede to the background where they belong.

In a scathing letter, Lawrence Auster has written that ". . . when he [D'Souza] finally discusses the hereditarian position at length, Mr. D'Souza, after much hemming and hawing, reluctantly admits that he has no arguments against it: '*The Bell Curve* makes a strong case that cannot be ignored . . . The conclusion of most scholars is that despite many caveats, there is no scientific basis for rejecting the possibility that race differences in I.Q. are partly hereditary' (475-76). Having quietly conceded what he loudly denounces as 'racist' everywhere else in his book, Mr. D'Souza looks for an escape hatch: 'it is possible to reject the fatalism of genetic theories of I.Q. differences, as I do. My view is that . . . it is a reasonable hypothesis that [racial] I.Q. differences can be explained by culture and environment.' But he offers not a shred of support for

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that 'reasonable hypothesis,' other than his wish that it be true — and his hope that some future evidence may conform it."[8]

According to D'Souza, the civilization gap between black and white is not genetic, but a consequence of blacks' maladaptive culture. Is "black culture" really maladaptive? D'souza claims that under slavery blacks, while not engaged in open rebellion, developed admiration for the "bad nigger," who defied authority, stole from the master, malingered, broke tools, etc. Unfortunately, this "bad" type has been exalted into the present by liberal social policies. Furthermore, affirmative action and diversity programs stress differences among people, and blacks hired for their race may emphasize what makes their race distinctive, the values of the bad nigger from the ghetto. Because of liberal paternalism's double standards, they were allowed to remain "bad." So cultural adaptations acquired during and appropriate to slavery have been reemphasized since the 1970s. D'Souza judges those traits to be maladaptive today. Glorification of the bad nigger culture results in high crime, drug, and illegitimacy rates and all the pathologies associated with the ghetto. The cause is not the genes but culture.

Yet D'Souza never really disproves the possibility that the underlying causes of the differences between blacks and whites is genetic. Worse yet, the culture he deplores may be responsible for much of black "progress" in recent decades. Had there been no riots in the 1960s and constant treats of rioting since, would Nixon have made affirmative action national policy? And would it remain so without the threats of further rioting? Crime, in this context, is a riot in slow motion. The coke-addicted black muggers and murderers may, through fear, "persuade" wealthy, and guilt-ridden whites to subsidize lesser-qualified blacks into the middle class. Of course, the poor and middle class white is then mugged from below and shafted from above by the liberal elite. What D'Souza castigates as maladaptive black culture may not be maladaptive at all. Instead, in liberal society, along with crime, so-called "maladaptive culture" may be actually profitable .

Determined to avoid dealing with conspiracies, D'Souza does not mention the conspiracy in the EEOC that changed the nature of civil rights law. He does point out, however, that affirmative action and the civil rights establishment is an alliance of wealthy whites and middle-class blacks (411). What he does not emphasize is that it is often poor and middle-class whites who pay for the "good conscience efforts" of the wealthy — in lost jobs, lost promotions, extra expenditures for children to enter college because they were denied scholarships reserved for minorities, etc. Gitlin invokes some of Michael Novak's arguments concerning on how liberal policies ruined public schools, public housing, public parks, etc., but Gitlin forgets class and pretends poor whites are simply racists. He also suggests that a poor, white teen, because of his race, is as privileged as, e.g., Senator Kennedy (121). Steinberg assumes that *all* blacks are oppressed by *all*

8. In *The Wall Street Journal* (November 13, 1995).

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whites. Only a neo-conservative like D'Souza discusses, if only on one page, class issues at the heart of affirmative action and the liberal welfare state.

The End of Racism is an encyclopedic work carefully documenting most of its main claims and showing familiarity with a vast array of topics. Yet, not everyone is impressed with it. On the Left, Todd Gitlin has complained that D'Souza's research is "sloppy" and "amateurish" (Gitlin, 175). On the Right, David Gordon has written that: "The book is utterly bad, one of the worst I have read in many years . . . D'Souza's level of inaccuracy and the incompetence of his arguments are staggering."[9] Unlike Gittlin, Gordon does point out some of D'Souza's failings in discussing evolution, and some errors concerning Giordano Bruno and Houston Stewart Chamberlain, but these are trivial within the context of the whole project.

Clearly, social science has failed to provide a realistic analysis of race. Worse yet, it has framed the issue in a destructive way threatening, if taken seriously, a major race confrontation as more and more blacks buy into the predominant social science ideology and declare themselves, not Americans, but Africans in America. It is not surprising, therefore, that Farrakhan seeks to carve up the US and create an independent black nation. If American society is to be saved from disintegration, then it is necessary to stop appeasing black racists and their allies among the liberal elite. After all, it is not unreasonable for a society to take measures to insure its survival.

Hugh Murray

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9. David Gordon, review of D'Sousa's *The End of Racism*, in *The Mises Report* (Winter 1995).

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